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ACADIAN CULTURE CENTER

VOLUME 1

HALIFAX

ANDCASSOCIATES

ARCHITECTS

THE CAJUNS: THEIR HISTORY AND CULTURE

HAMILTON AND ASSOCIATES
A Professional Architectural Corporation
Opelousas, Louisiana

Jean Lafitte National Historic Park
New Orleans, Louisiana

This Research was conducted through Contract NPS: CX8029-7-0004 between the National Park Service and Hamilton and Associates for the Acadian Culture Centers planned for Lafayette, Eunice, and Thibodaux.

July, 1987

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

When my family moved to Acadiana almost forty years ago, little did I know that the son of a Protestant minister would someday learn that he was a Cajun. Of all the facts and information I've learned while working with our Research Team on this project, the most significant revelation was that I had become a Cajun also.

First of all, I would like to thank the members of our Research Team for accepting my invitation to join our firm's endeavor to be selected to perform the task of conducting the research for this project.

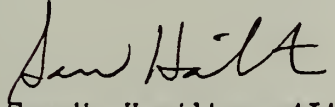
I would also like to especially thank the National Park Service for selecting Hamilton and Associates, from among many notable applicants, to conduct the research, to report the Acadian Culture, and to design the structures and exhibits, including programs, to present the Acadian Culture.

I would like to specifically thank Mr. James L. Isenogle, Superintendent, and his Jean LaFitte National Historic Park staff for assisting our Research and Design Teams during this Phase 1 Conceptual Design period. Their attendance at our planning meetings and critiques of our work in a professional and timely manner are truly appreciated.

My sincere appreciation is given to each member of the Research Team and, in particular, to Mr. Barry Jean Ancelet for working so closely with me to coordinate our efforts and for serving as Research Team Director. The team's knowledge and sensitivity to the Acadian Culture has added energy and intensity to our work.

I would also like to thank the groups representing Lafayette, Eunice, and Thibodaux who gave their time, knowledge, and encouragement during the research and planning periods of this project. Their sharing of ideas and input make our work more meaningful.

I would also like to extend my special and immediate thanks to the members of our firm who have, as always, so diligently and professionally assisted my efforts to transform this research into appropriate design solutions for the Acadian Culture Centers planned for Lafayette, Eunice, and Thibodaux.



Sam W. Hamilton, AIA
Opelousas, Louisiana
July, 1987

FOREWORD

The National Park Service entered into a contract with Hamilton and Associates to develop the Conceptual Plans for the Acadian Culture Centers planned for Lafayette, Eunice, and Thibodaux.

The Conceptual Plans consist of drawings, sketches, outline specifications and cost estimates to illustrate appropriate structures, site improvements, static exhibits, muti-media presentations, and programming recommendations.

It was necessary for an in-depth research effort to be conducted so that all conceptual plans, especially the exhibits and their text, could be based on historical fact. Much of the effort to conduct the research was accomplished by the Research Team assigned this portion of the project while the coordination of this effort was accomplished by our Design Team.

These Conceptual Plans, based on the research conducted, will serve as a guide to implement preliminary plans and construction documents from which the Acadian Culture Centers will evolve.

RESEARCH TEAM

Barry Ancelet	Project Director/ Folk Culture
Dewey Balfa	Music/Programming
David Barry	Linguistics
Carl Braseaux	History
Jay Edwards	Cultural Anthropology
Ruth Fontenot	Foodways
Fred Kniffen	Cultural Geography
Randall LaBry	Film
Elemore Morgan, Jr.	Visual Arts
Glen Pitre	Wetlands Folklife
Robert Smith	Furniture and Furnishings
Jane Vidrine	Programming

COORDINATOR

Sam Hamilton

MANAGER

Jennifer Charnews

EDITOR

Claude 'Oubre

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VOLUME ONE

PART I INTRODUCTION

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PART I INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Barry Jean Ancelet

This report is based on the research of a team of scholars chosen for their knowledge of various aspects of Louisiana French culture and history. It is interdisciplinary in its approach as well as in its format. It is considerably larger than originally planned and represents the largest collection of written information on this subject ever assembled in such a document.

Coordination of the research was done before, during, and after the research period. The composition of the team reflected a wide range of areas to be covered. Assignments were made according to the area of expertise of each scholar, ranging from specific topics such as suisine and religion to general topics such as history and settlement. Each scholar addressed the issues within his/her area, independently producing articles, lists and recommendations. However, meetings were held at irregular intervals to ensure communication and reinforcement between researchers. Finally, when the articles and lists were submitted, they were collected and collated to present the information in an orderly and sequential manner. Some pieces were edited, condensed or expanded to their present form.

Their are essentially two categories of research included in the report. One is broad and informational, containing articles which present background information in narrative form. Together, these articles cover the history and culture of the Cajuns and development of this ethnic identity from a variety of perspectives including history

and humor, folklore and folklife, material culture and music, language and landscape. The other is more specific and technical, containing lists of resources, including people, artifacts, films and images, as well as recommendations for exhibits and programming. Photocopies, included in some reports, are intended as examples of content, not of quality.

It is intended that this information will help to guide the development of the Jean Lafitte National Historical Park's Acadian Culture Centers and their satellite sites. The historical parts research would help to accurately depict the origins and development of the Cajuns. Some parts of the research are very contemporary, reflecting trends current up to the submission of this report. It should be noted, however, that Cajun culture is very much alive and continues to evolve. The socio-cultural environment is changing much faster than the physical environment and those who would interpret the former in a National Park setting should try to develop a system which takes into consideration this natural cultural and social evolution. It may be that the most effective way of keeping up with people is with people. In any case, the most recent research included in this report will soon become historical in nature. The Park Service should try to develop a system which will be able to update itself so that it can remain an accurate reflection of historical, cultural and social realities.

Sites

In the original proposal submitted by Hamilton and Associates to the National Park Service, we attempted to describe the three major sites to be developed in connection with this project. The following points bear repeating in this final report, by way of general recommendations.

There will eventually be three principal sites for the interpretation of Acadian history and culture in the Jean Lafitte system: a general interpretive center in Lafayette, an easily accessible city with an airport and located at the junction of Interstates 10 and 49; a prairie culture center in Eunice; and a wetlands culture center in Thibodaux. The objective of these sites will be to provide visitors a pleasant and effective way to learn accurate information about the history and culture of Louisiana's Cajuns. The sites will also serve as points of contact, so that interested visitors can experience Cajun culture without inadvertently trampling it. An additional function of these interpretive centers should be to provide the native population with a reliable source of information on its own culture and history which have all too often been misrepresented and stereotyped by misinformed outsiders and insiders alike.

A general interpretive center designed to tell the story of the Acadian migration from France to Acadia in the early 1600's and eventually to Louisiana after the exile in 1755 will be located in Lafayette, which is situated on the geographic and cultural cusp between the prairie and the wetlands. The facility itself must not attempt to be a quaint reproduction or a cultural stereotype. It

must be a highly accessible modern facility to house both static exhibits and multi-media installations designed to provide an accurate general orientation for visitors based on solid research covering a broad range of subject, including history, geography, art, religion and cuisine.

Generations which have grown up with radio, television, movies and computers have learned to expect a certain amount of technical sophistication in the communication of information. An intimate multi-purpose theater with seating for approximately one hundred people will feature a large-scale computer controlled multi-screen slide and/or film presentation with narration designed to educate and well as entertain visitors. This presentation will accurately reflect historical development as well as contemporary culture and social patterns, while dispelling common misconceptions and stereotypes. It will introduce visitors to important issues such as the development of subregional cultures and dialects, the South Louisiana melting pot and the transformation from Acadians to Cajuns, the diversity of Cajun society, the seasonal life cycle in South Louisiana (Mardi Gras, blessing of the fleets, hunting, harvests, Toussaint, etc.), the development of architecural styles, the economic structure (subsistence and cash crop farming, trapping, fishing, and the oil industry, etc).

NOTE: All contributors reserve the literary rights to their original articles.

PART II THE GEOGRAPHICAL SETTING

A GEOGRAPHICAL HISTORY OF ACADIE

Jay Edwards

The purpose of this chapter is to review selected elements of the culture history of the Acadians in Nova Scotia in order to answer the question of what geographically related cultural adaptations the inhabitants of Acadia brought with them when they settled in Louisiana. We will review the economic basis of Acadian culture in Nova Scotia and the reasons it developed in the manner it did. We will then turn our attention to the first years of settlement in Louisiana in order to discover whether the Acadian experience in Canada provided them with preadaptations for life in Louisiana. The name ACADIE is a name applied by the French to distinguish eastern maritime New France from the settlements along the St. Lawrence River.

It is often suggested that the word "Cajun" is a corruption of "Acadian," a Colonial period phonetic transformation following the model of English "Indian" to "Injun." Less often pointed out, however, is the fact that the name "Canada" derives from the same root as "Cajun,"--the French name, "Arcady" (Var.: "Arcadie"). Phonetic corruptions were not solely the property of the Anglo settlers! The toponym was originally applied to the northern coasts of North America by the successful French privateer and merchant, Jean d'Ango (1481-1551). He was once the governor of the port of Dieppe, in Normandy, and as such, he financed the Atlantic explorations of Captain Verrazano, Ca. 1540.

ACADIAN POPULATION IN ARCADIE:

1632	300	1701	1450
1654	300-350	1714	about 2500
1671	450		(Arcaneaux 1982: 14)
1675	515	1737	7598 (Brasseaux B-4:3)
1693	over 1000	1755	12,000-18,000

Although the Bay of Fundy had been settled by Frenchmen as early as 1603, farming did not begin at Beaubassin until around 1671; around Grand Pre in Minas Basin about 1680. The spread of new population away from Port Royal may have been the result of the desire to avoid seigneurial duties. Also, Port Royal was subject to attacks by the British. Officials there tried to prevent trade with the New Englanders, but the newly settled Acadians discovered that contraband trade with the merchants of New England was far more lucrative than controlled trade with the French Royal Company.

Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries wars strongly colored the relations between the Anglos and the French in North America. Acadia/Nova Scotia changed hands periodically as a result of these wars. Late in the seventeenth century, King William's War (1689-1697 - the American phase of the larger European War of the League of Augsburg) resulted in the Capture of Acadia by the British. When the Treaty of Ryswick restored all captured territories the British colonists were outraged. Within five years, Queen Ann's war (1702-1713 - the American phase of the War of Spanish Succession) broke out. By 1710 most of Acadia was captured by the British. At the

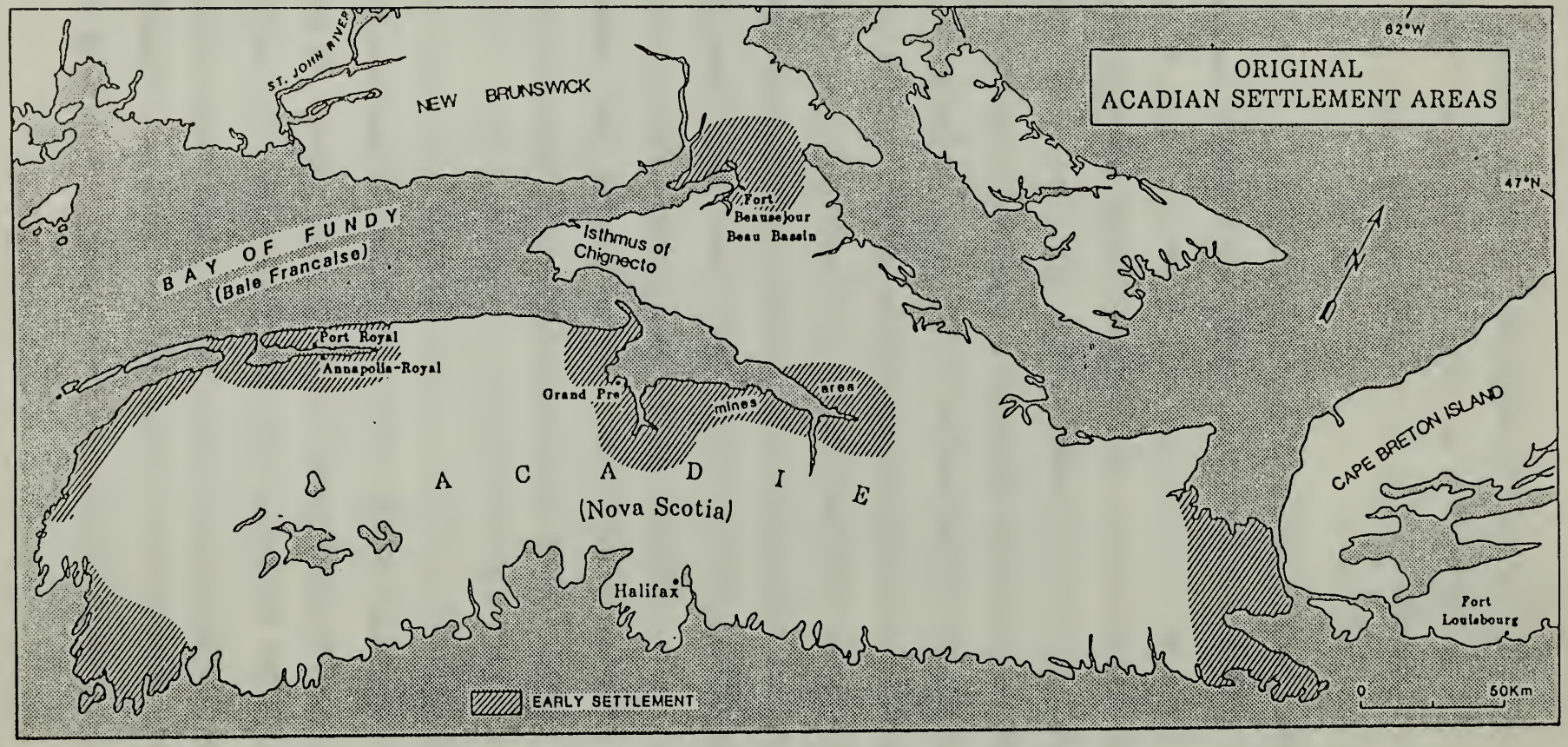
conclusion of hostility England adamantly refused to surrender Acadia/Nova Scotia. Consequently, under the terms of the Treaty of Wrecht in 1713, Acadia/Nova Scotia became a British colony.

Geographical Precursors of Louisiana Settlement

Bay of fundy was important in determining settlement patterns in this area. Its coast is not rugged, like the Eastern coast of Nova Scotia. Indeed, the coastline is relatively straight with few inlets. This helps to create the tremendous tides, 30' - 40', which in turn have created the vast tidal marshlands at the head of the Bay. In the 1680s these were the only areas free of almost impenetrable forest--immense fields of grass and pasture. Thus, Port Royal (now Annapolis Royal) was a natural location for early Acadian settlement. Three salt marshes were found to be enormously fertile once the salt had been removed from the soil (Port Royal, Minas Basin-Cobequid, Chignecto Bay). It was easier to make dykes than to cut down the forests on the uplands, and the soil was much richer. The forests, the home of the MicMac Indians, were exploited for fuel and food (Arceneaux 1982:3-5).

Indian Relations

The Micmac appear to have been non-agricultural Indians of the Eastern Woodlands culture. Because the French and the Micmacs exploited different ecozones, no serious conflict arose between them, and a relationship of mutural trust grew up gradually. Both societies enjoyed the trade which brought furs to the Acadians and European technology to the Indians. The French borrowed many Indian ways (canoe, food and


ORIGINAL
ACADIAN SETTLEMENT AREAS
62°W
47°N
ST. JOHN RIVER
NEW BRUNSWICK
BAY OF FUNDY
(Baie Francaise)
Isthmus of
Chignecto
Fort
Beausejour
Beau Bassin
Port Royal
Annapolis-Royal
Grand Pre
area
mines
A C A D I E
(Nova Scotia)
CAPE BRETON ISLAND
Halifax
Port
Louisbourg
EARLY SETTLEMENT
0
50Km

agricultural exploitation), and the Indians became accustomed to French ways. A profound distrust of the British was learned by the Indians, who participated in raids on the communities of New England with the French. Because of this, the English always mistrusted the Acadians, believing them responsible for Indian hostility.

Nova Scotia was retaken by the British in the "Second Dutch War", 1647 (Aceneaux 1982:10). In 1667, the Treaty of Breda returned Acadia to the French (English control until 1670). On returning, the French took a census. The population around Port Royal was recorded as sixty-seven families. Perhaps another 100 or so metis (half-breeds) resided in the area. Three hundred colonists, mostly men, had arrived in 1632. A full generation later the colony had pretty much remained stable, despite total French neglect.

The tidal basins of Acadia had not been exploited until d'Aulney moved the colonists from LaHave after Razilly's death in 1635. The origins of the dyking are unknown. It is possible that some of the settlers had come from areas of France where the practice existed (Arceneaux 1982:11). This has not been proven historically. Dyking is a time-consuming business. It requires about three years after the dykes have been completed until the land can be reclaimed. Bay of Fundy marsh was exceptionally fertile, needing little fertilizer. When exceptionally high tides or British destruction opened the fields to salt water, they had to be recured, requiring another three years (Arceneaux:1982:12).

Settlement Patterns

The Acadian people lived along the banks of the rivers, above pre-dyke high tide line. They lived in the midst of vast fields of grass and wheat; rye, corn and oats were also cultivated, together with peas, potatoes, cabbages, apples, flax and hemp. Pigs, sheep and cattle were left to roam in the forest in the summer. They were fed on cabbage in the winter. The economy was typical of western Europe for this period.

The lineal settlement pattern was already established in Acadia before the Acadians moved to Louisiana. After moving to the bayous of lower Louisiana, the Acadians merely perpetuated their familiar settlement pattern in which houses lined the banks of the watercourses. Thus, the strip village is an artifact of Acadian history as much as Louisiana geography.

Occupations

The original Acadians were carpenters, coopers, blacksmiths, fishermen, shipbuilders, trappers and sealers, as well as farmers and pasturalists. Acadians in the Chignecto peninsula raised cattle on small ranches.

Aristocratic Influences

Some Frenchmen had inherited the seigneurial rights to parts of Acadie. For example, Emmanuel LeBorgne and later Alexandre LeBorgne inherited rights to the lands around Port Royal. They attempted to collect signorial fees, apparently without great success. Almost to a man, the Acadians considered themselves free of Aristocratic obligations.

Approach to Le Grand Dérangement

1744 - War of Austrian Succession (King George's War). French held the fort at Louisbourg, near the eastern end of Nova Scotia. It was supplied and provisioned by the Acadians (Arceneaux 1882:23).

Louisbourg was taken by the British in 1745, but returned to the French in 1748 by the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle. Since the Acadians had not helped the English during this war, they were considered unreliable and undesirable. Their loyalty was only to Acadie.

Meanwhile, the French in anticipation of yet another war with the British strengthened their hold on New Brunswick, Louisbourg and the mouth of the St. Johns River. The French also tried to force the Acadians to move onto French territory in New Brunswick. The English imported about 2500 Protestant colonists to Halifax, as a counter to the French presence at Louisbourg (Arceneaux 1982:33).

The British ordered the Acadians to take an oath of allegence or be expelled within three months. The Acadians refused to take the oath. The demand that the oath be taken was relaxed temporarily when the English realized that the Acadians were as resistant to French pressure as they were to English.

In July of 1754, however, a new threat of war arose with the battle at Fort Necessity. Both French and English realized that war was just a matter of time. The English struck first, attacking and capturing Fort Beausejour in June of 1755. Fort Gaspereau and the Saint John River post were captured shortly thereafter. Unfortunately for the Acadians, some Acadians were discovered within the walls of Fort

Beausejour when it surrendered. To the English, this implied that the Acadians were combatants and a protential threat to British sovereignty. Strong actions were called for. The powerful fort at Louisbourg was still in French hands and the Acadians and Indians would help to provision and defend it. Once again, the demand was raised that the Acadians swear loyalty to the British Crown. They were not told of the consequences. The deputies for the Acadians again refused to take the oath, claiming that no such oath would make them loyal, and that the best demonstration of their nutrality could be found on the grounds of their past actions. The English were not persuaded by these arguments.

Governor Lawrence now decided that deportation was the most viable solution. However, instead of returning the Acadians to French soil, they would be sent to the English colonies, there to become proper English subjects. The threat of deportation had been made in the July 1755 meeting, but the Acadians assumed that if it were ever carried out, they would be deported into French Canadian territory.

The Grand Dérangement

The deportations began almost immediately. The first communities affected were those in Chignecto because of the previous involvement of Acadians at Fort Beausejour. All men and boys were told to present themselves at the English fort on August 9, 1755. About 400 came in and were taken prisoner. Perhaps half of the men and boys from the Chignecto area escaped northward.

The prisoners were held and then shipped to the Carolinas and Georgia (the distance in proportion to the magnitude of their treason).

Note that the Chignecto area was one in which small cattle ranches were very common. Thus, we can trace the route of migration and diffusion of the cattle complex from Chignecto to the southern colonies. From there the route becomes more difficult to follow, however. In general, it appears that most of the Acadian deportees either returned eventually to Nova Scotia or found their ways to the West Indies, before moving on to Louisiana.

Other Acadian settlements along the northeast side of the peninsula of Nova Scotia received the same treatment. Many Acadians did not believe that they would actually be deported and so they behaved in a docile manner. After the men were interned, the women and children remained in the houses until transports were available. Then families were loaded on board the ships, the houses and crops burned and the livestock confiscated.

Now, years of untolled hardship and misery began. Much of it was not due to deliberate cruelty on the part of the British (though there was enough of that to go around), but rather to poor preparation and planning for the care of the Acadians. Disease also took a terrible toll. One ship left Nova Scotia with 417 Acadians on board and arrived in South Carolina with only 210 still alive (Arceneaux 1982: 38). In Philadelphia, the Acadians were forced to remain on board their ship for three months in the middle of winter. Over 200 lost their lives to smallpox and other diseases during this time.

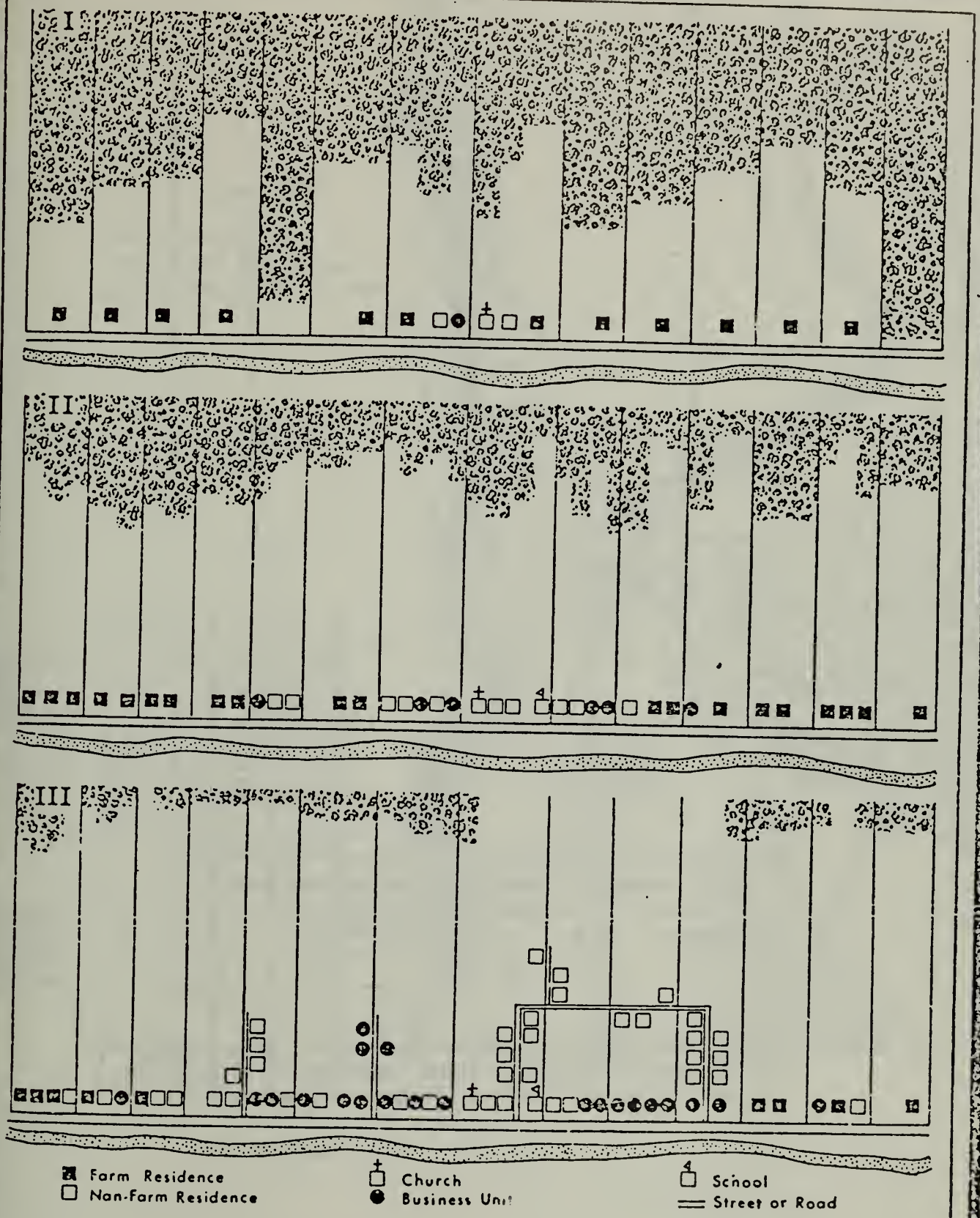
Many Acadians escaped the British roundup. Some joined French forces to fight an effective guerrilla war against the English, forcing them to abandon several forts and capturing or killing many. Seventeen

English vessels were captured in the Bay of Fundy, but in general, the Acadians were progressively forced to move their homes further and further to the north and west. Gradually, the French forces weakened until their entire command structure collapsed in 1759.

Eventually, many of the Acadians returned to Nova Scotia, both from Quebec and from the English colonies. Some were permitted to settle once again in the province, but care was taken to insure that they were widely scattered. In addition, several thousand Acadians who had fled into the woods of New Brunswick, now gradually moved back to give themselves up. This act of desperation was largely in response to British raids, military successes, and because of the imminant threat of starvation which faced them. Many of these Acadians were interned near Halifax.

In terms of Louisiana history, one of the most significant events involved this group of Acadians who had returned to the Halifax area. Six hundred agreed to resettle in Saint Domingue. In Nov. 1764, they departed at their own expense. As early as Feb. 1765, 192 had moved to New Orleans. Most of the others followed in the spring of 1765 (Arceneaux 1982:44. see B-4: 34 for another interpretation). In all, over 2000 Acadians arrived in the West Indies in 1764 and 1765, according to Debien.

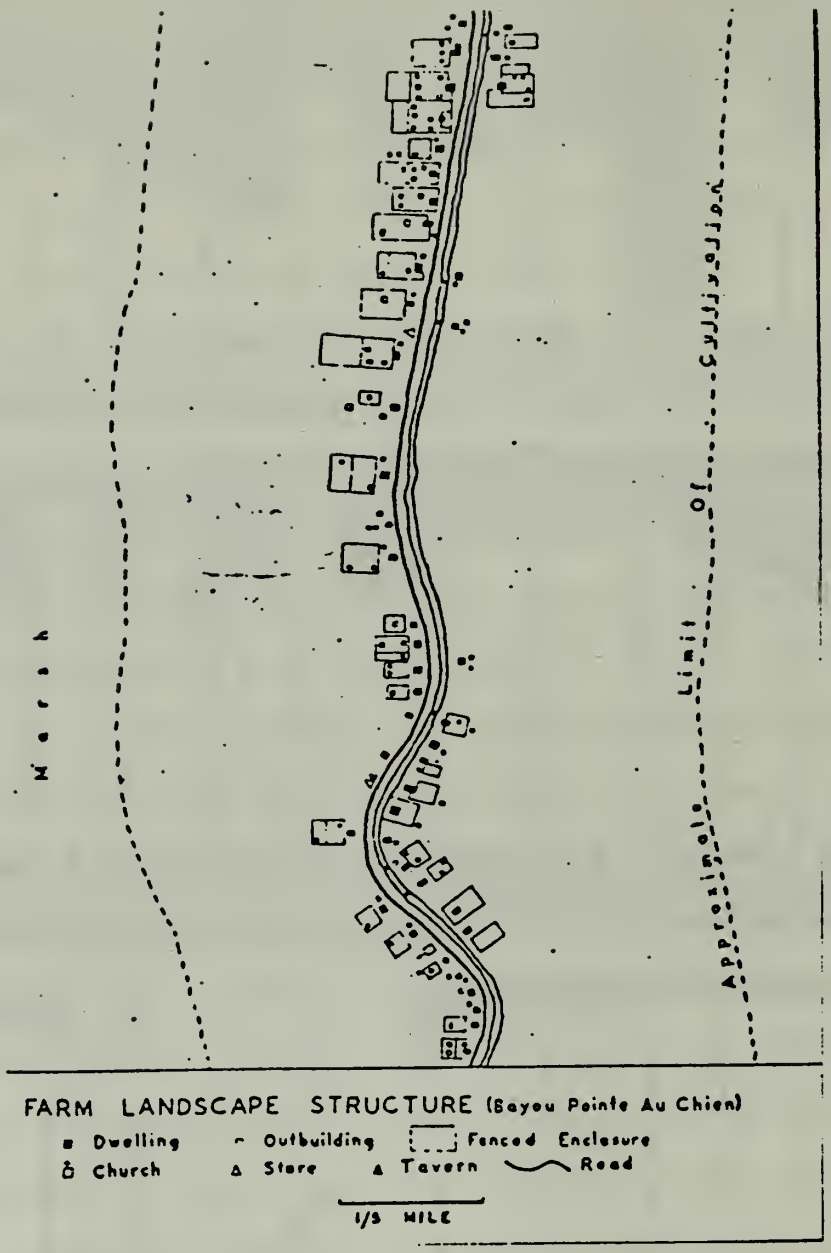
In 1766 at least one ship departed from Halifax directly for New Orleans. The implication of these historical movements is that the first Acadians to settle in the Bayou Teche area were NOT DEPORTEES from the 1755 Grand Derangement. Instead, they were for the most part Acadians who had remained in Nova Scotia for the following nine years,



DEVELOPMENT OF BAYOU LINE SETTLEMENT

(Source Newton:1972)

FIG. 1

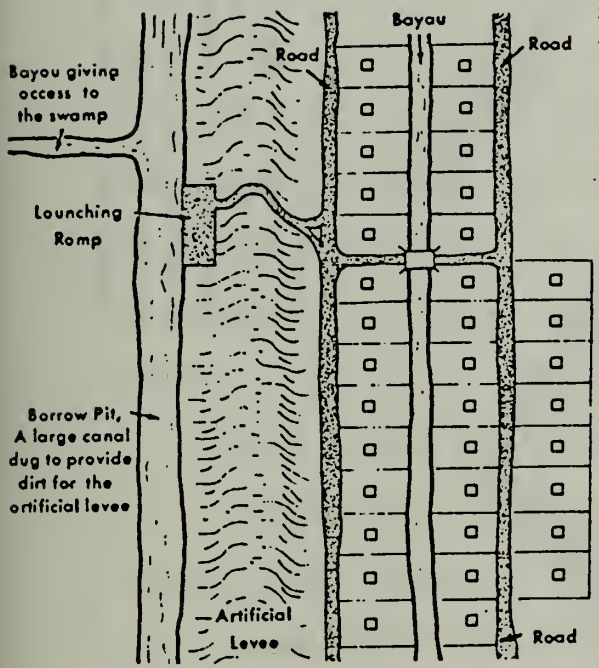


Farm landscape structure on lower bayou. Note importance of decreasing width of levee land that is prohibitive to plantation agriculture. (Source:Knipmeyer:1956)

FIG. 2

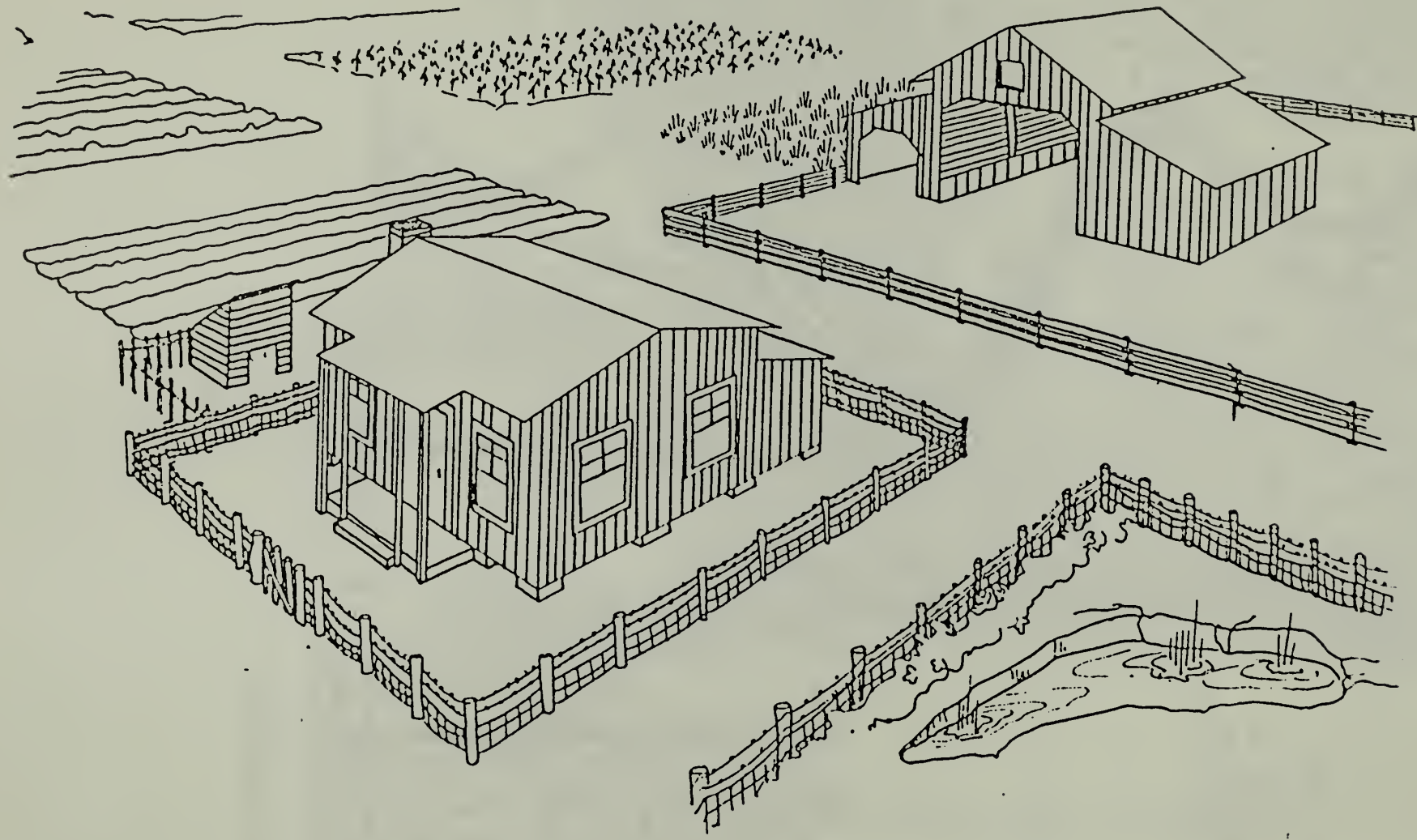
(Source:Abbey:1967)

Note: Pierre Part is not in the Basin as contained by the levees



(Source: Comeaux)

FIG. 3



A drawing of a contemporary Upper Teche farmstead. Though the barn type may vary, the house type, fence type, and wide headlands between the crops are all characteristic of the Upper Teche complex. The small enclosures, the few buildings, the simplicity in general are highly suggestive of the early Acadian settlements. (Taylor:1956)

FIG. 4

only then to move on briefly to Santo Domingo or directly to Louisiana. Those who first settled along Bayou Teche in 1765 had never known the rigors of life in the American colonies. The implication of this information for the Evangeline/Emmiline Labiche legend of Acadian origins should be obvious, though it has not received the recognition it deserves.

Acadians In Louisiana

In Feb. 1765, the acting governor in New Orleans, Charles-Phillippe Aubry, was informed that almost two hundred Acadians had arrived from the West Indies. They had been issued bills of service or card money worth 47,000 livres, which Aubry was not able to honor. It had been issued in Canada between 1752 and 1760 (Arceneaux 1982: 50). Aubry attemped to convince the Acadians to settle on the Mississippi River above New Orleans, but they preferred to move to the Attakapas district on Bayou Teche. In April, 1765, they set out for their new Acadie.

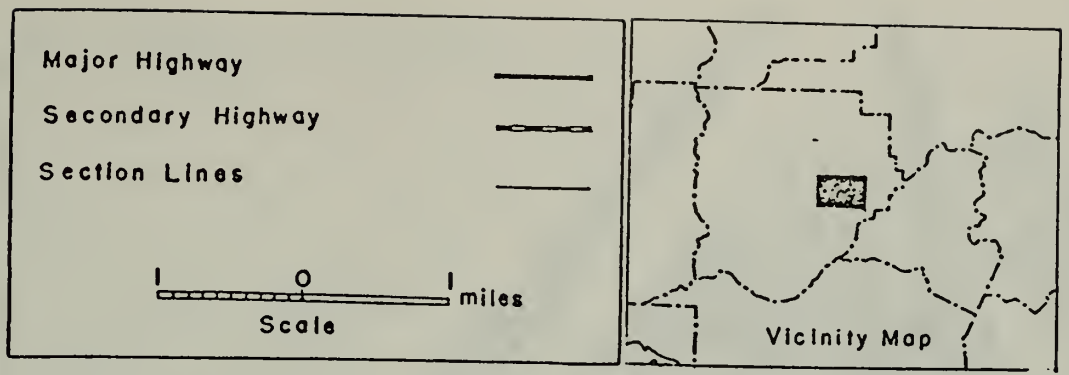
Before leaving New Orleans, the Acadian leaders signed a contract with Antoine Bernard Dauterive. It provided that the Acadians would be provided with cattle for breeding purposes in return for a share of their increase (Arceneaux 1982:67). Thus, the very first economic enterprise considered by the Acadians was stock raising. It is highly likely that many of these Acadians derived from the Chignecto area--those who had escaped the first British round-up. Could it be these same Acadians, familiar with cattle ranching who established the early ranches on the prairies?

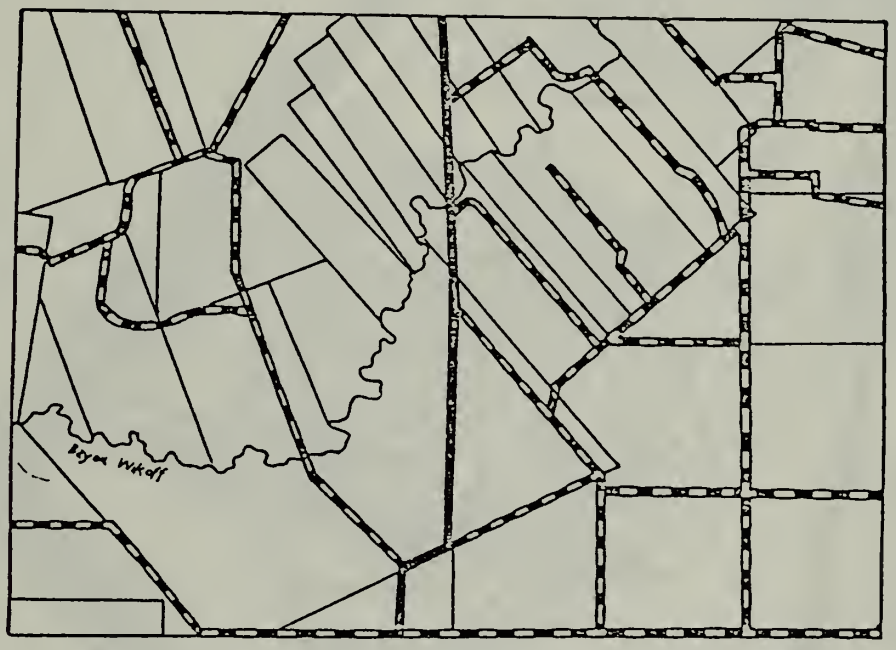
The French government attempted to aid the new immigrants. A three month's supply of food was given to them, including ammunition and medicine. Later, another three-months supply was sent.

Dauterive and his partner, Edouard Masse, turned land in the Attakapas over to the Acadians in return for another land grant, further west. The names of the eight Acadian leaders were Joseph Broussard called Beausoleil (who had been a rebel leader in the Anti-British campaign after 1755), Alexandre Broussard, Joseph Guilbeaux, Jean Dugas, Olivier Thibodeaux, Jean Baptiste Broussard, Pierre Arceneaux, and Victor Broussard. Joseph Broussard was the recognized leader of the group.

A royal engineer, Sieur Andry, went with the Acadians to help them lay out their village. Each family was to have twenty sqauare arpents of land, with more included for each child. The village was supposed to have a church square. Beausoleil was to have first choice of lots. The village was to have a commons to be used for grazing of livestock. The instructions given Engineer Andry by Aubry clearly indicate that the Acadians were supposed to live in a compact village and to return to their homes from their fields each night. However, the typical settlement pattern then in use in both Louisiana and Canada was the line-village type in which individual farmsteds lined the river banks. This is the form of settlement which was eventually adopted.

The period of settlement was difficult for the Acadians. Almost immediately upon arriving, an epidemic struck the community. By November, thirty-six of the immigrants had died, including half of the eight leaders.





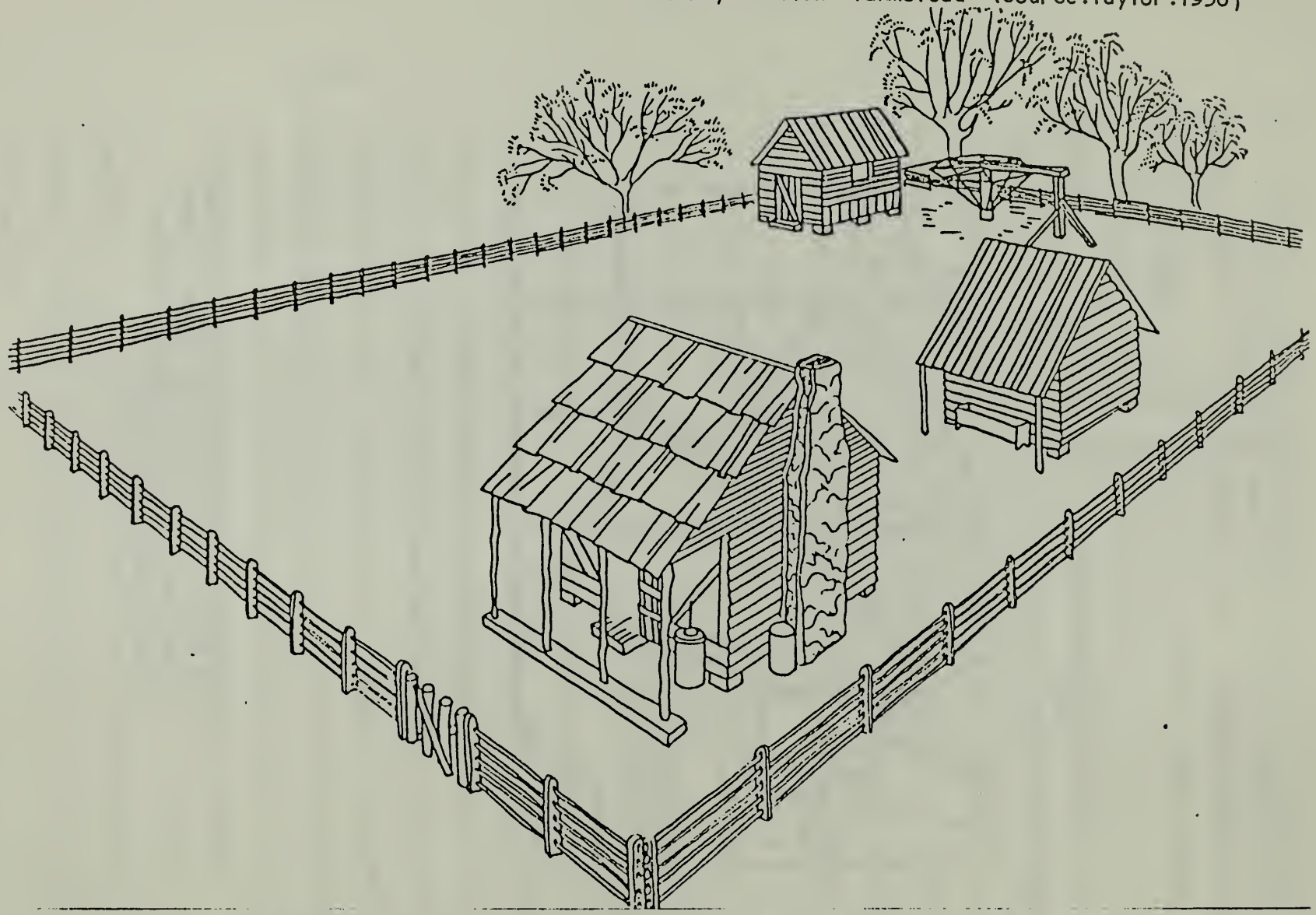
A Portion Of Acadia Parish

Showing Highways And Section Lines

Highways and section lines in a portion of Acadia Parish indicate change between French survey type and American type. (Source:Rehder:1956:93-94)

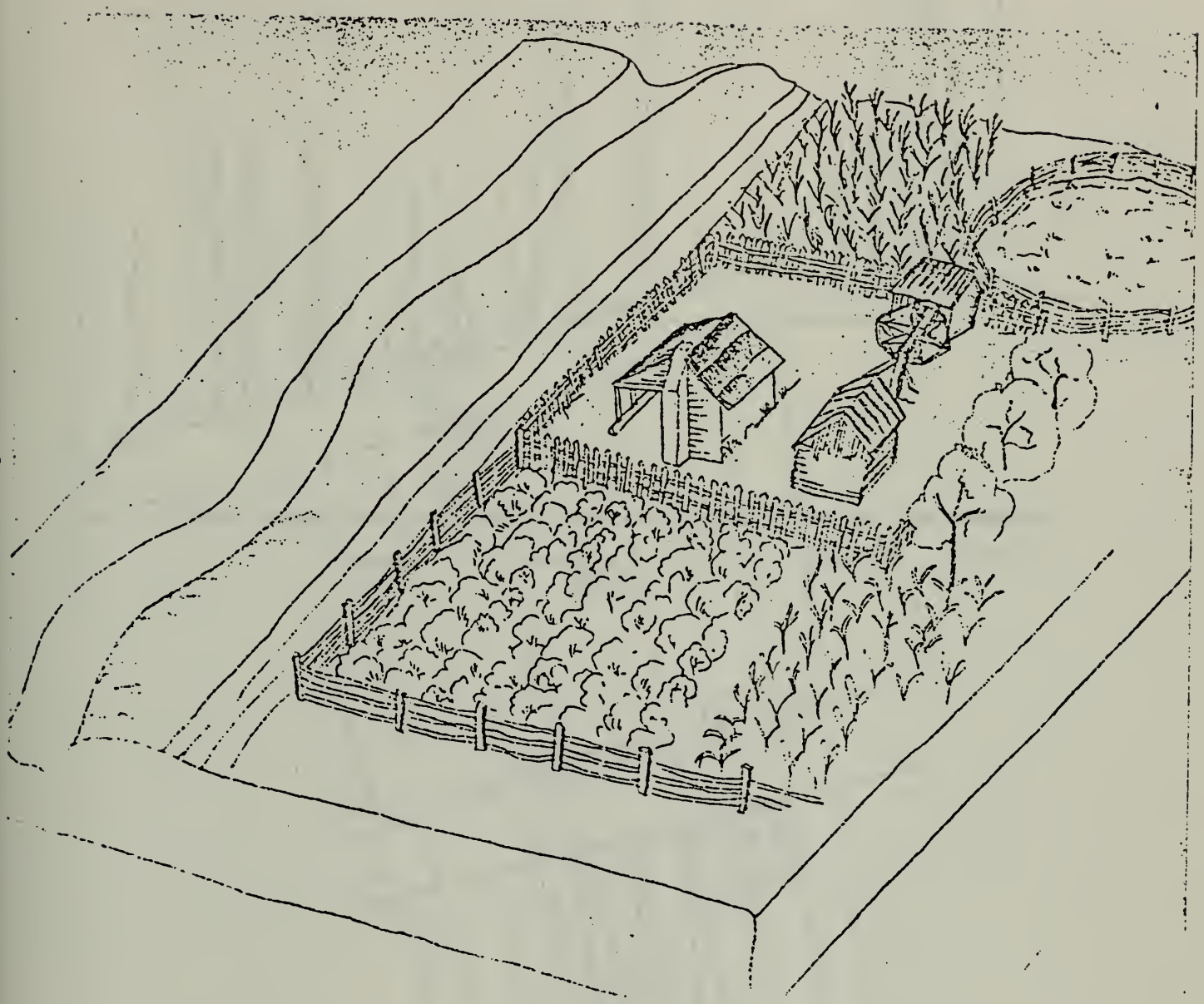
FIG. 5

An early Acadian farmstead (Source:Taylor:1956)



This drawing shows the simplicity of the farmstead and the relationship between the buildings with regard to size and location. The small building directly behind the house is constructed of horizontal logs and serves as grain storage. The extended roof of this building provides implement storage on one side and animal shelter on the other. The building and adjacent structure in the most distant corner of the enclosure is the grist mill. Outside the enclosure in the rear is a woodlot of Chinaberry trees. (Taylor: 956)

(Source:Taylor:1956)



An idealized sketch of an Acadian farmstead. Here may be seen the location of the house and crops in relation to the natural levee. Corn and sweet potatoes are usually grown nearer to the crest of the levee in the coarser-textured and better drained land, while sugarcane is placed lower on the natural levee in the poorer drained land. The circular enclosure is a pieux fence around a marais planted in Providence rice. (Taylor:1956)

FIG. 7.

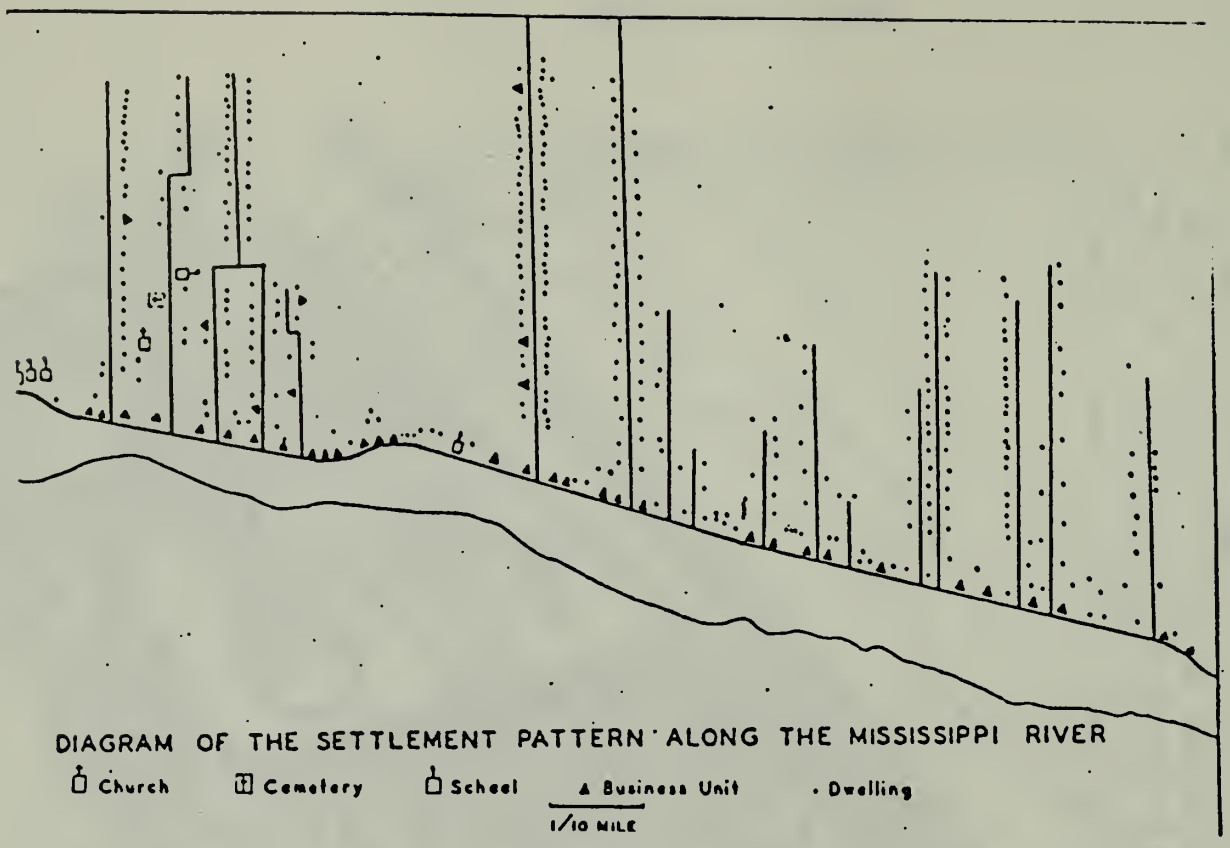


DIAGRAM OF THE SETTLEMENT PATTERN ALONG THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER

Church Cemetery School Business Unit Dwelling

1/10 MILE

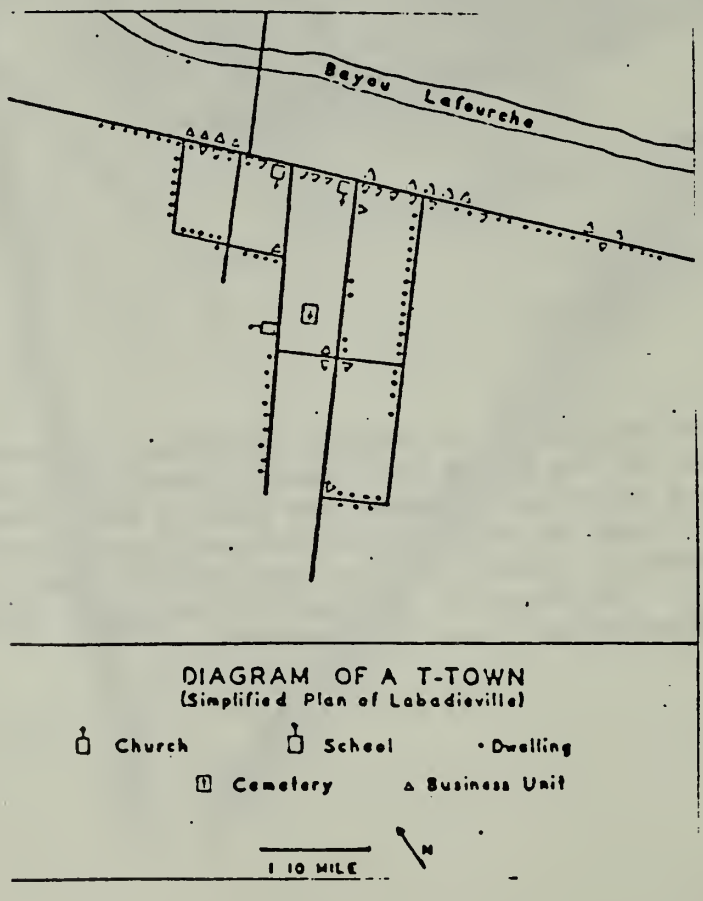


DIAGRAM OF A T-TOWN
(Simplified Plan of Labadieville)

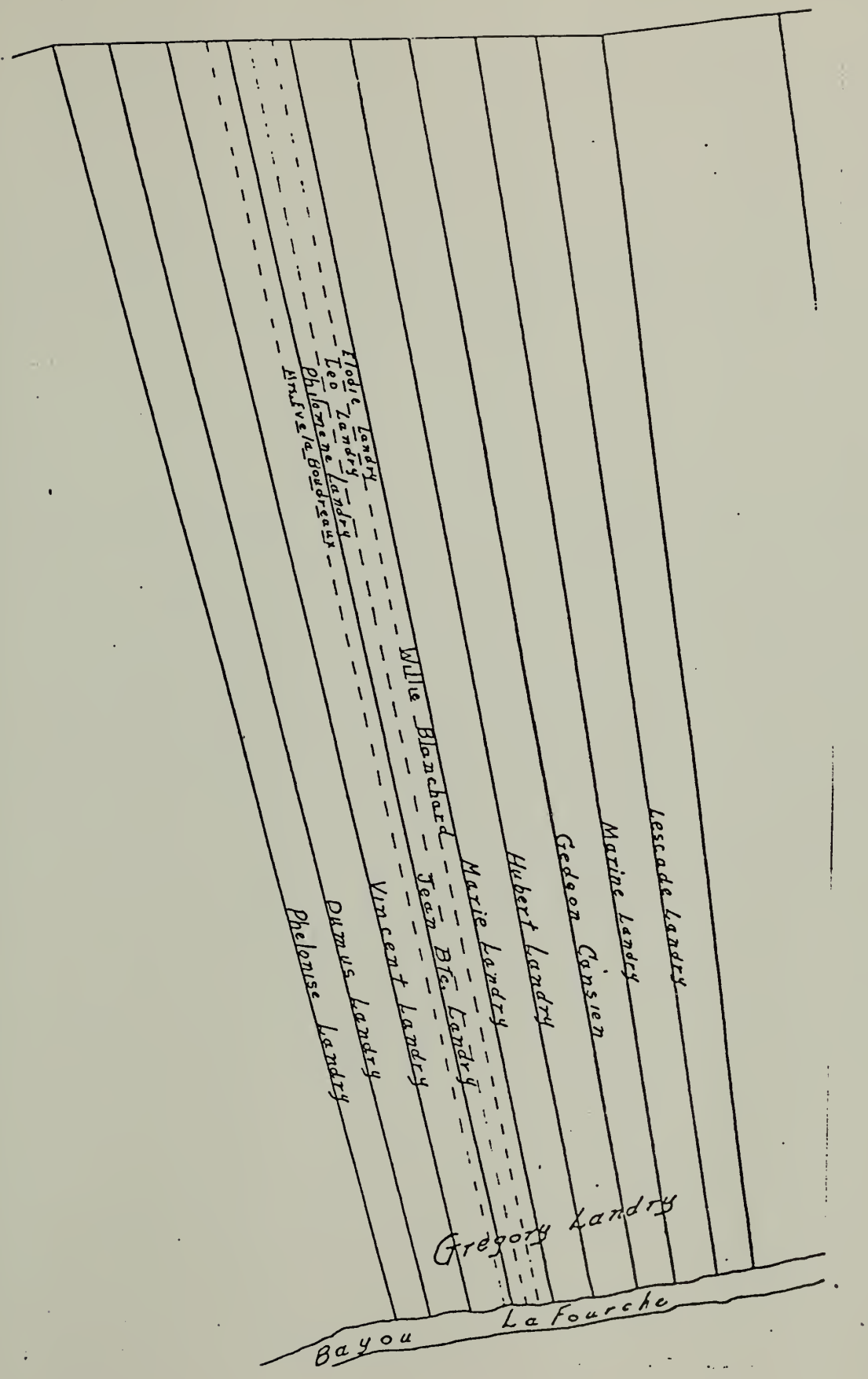
Church School Dwelling

Cemetery Business Unit

1 10 MILE

N

(Source: Knipmeyer: 1956) FIG. 8



(Source: Taylor:1956) FIG. 9

In March of 1766, the new Spanish governor, Ulloa, ordered a complete census of the territory. That census shows that the total population of the colony was 4,445 whites and 5,940 slaves. Five hundred Acadians now resided in the colony. Four hundred of these lived on the Mississippi, only about 125 of the original 230 Acadians who had moved to Attakapas in 1765 now still resided there, while thirty lived in the Opelousas district. Many of the original settlers of the Attakapas had moved to the Mississippi River settlements of Cabanocey. Of those remaining in the Attakapas region, most were members of two kinship groups--the descendants of Joseph and Alexandre Broussard (37), and the descendants of Joseph Guilbeaux dit L'Officier. Interestingly, almost none of this group had been among the exiles. Careful geneological research of the families demonstrates that they were Acadians who had avoided the British deportation and who had fled northward or hidden in Nova Scotia until the period of deportation was over (Arceneaux 1982: 82-3).

THE LOCATION OF MAPS REFERRED TO IN THE VARIOUS SECTIONS OF THIS RESEARCH REPORT ARE INCLUDED AS APPENDIX 1.

THE READER IS REFERRED TO THESE MAPS FOR A GENERAL GEOGRAPHICAL AND CULTURAL OVERVIEW OF ACADIANA.

THE PRAIRIE CAJUNS AND THEIR LAND

Fred B. Kniffen

Foreword

It is presumed that what is recorded here is of value in the interpretation of Cajun life, specifically through the medium of cultural geography. The primary task of cultural geography is to set the way of doing things, of living, practiced by a specific people against a specific natural environment. It seeks definition of the manner in which the culture--that is, the knowledge, practices, and values of a people--utilize and modify the natural milieu in which the culture is set. The culture adapts to the advantages and limitations imposed by a specific set of natural qualities such as climate, vegetation, soils, minerals, geographic position. On the one side is man, equipped with knowledge, tools, tastes, and values, on the other the source of man's livelihood as provided by nature. Cultural geography can render judgment that a specific environment or piece of the earth provides well the resources needed by a specific people, and it can conclude whether the culture (people) has treated nature wisely or not.

Here we are dealing with the Prairie Cajuns, French-speaking, small-scale agriculturalists who late in the eighteenth century began moving westward across the Mississippi floodplain into the edge of the great prairie, with Opelousas the principal post to the north and Attakapas Post (St. Martinville) to the south. At least in part they were displaced along the immediate Mississippi bottomlands by the

growth of plantations, with the consequent absorption of small holdings.

By this period the descendants of the Acadians had perforce almost entirely abandoned the economy of their ancestors. The change had for many been abrupt and severe. In Canadian Acadia they farmed diked tidal lands. Wheat was the primary breadstuff; corn was unimportant. Apples, cherries, pears were their major fruits. Cabbages, carrots, onions, turnips were primary vegetables. Dairying was important. Sheep provided the yarn for textiles. Louisiana Acadians had to find alternatives in rice, cotton, corn, sugar cane, okra, and sweet potatoes. By the time they headed to the west, the Cajuns, as they now may be termed, were prepared to take advantage of the fertile border lands.

The western margins of the Mississippi floodplain, the natural levees of the Teche, and the eastern margins of the Prairie Terrace were superior in their agricultural potential. The excellent Mississipppi River deposits were reinforced by wind-blown loess and deposits from an ancient maze of Red River channels. This was agriculturally productive country, quite as good as the eastern margins of the floodplain from which the Cajuns had come. Furthermore, this marginal area was rather readily accessible to the Mississippi settlements via a natural system of navigable waterways. Schooners ascended the major streams, to be succeded by steamboats in the nineteenth century. Drives of cattle and horses actually crossed the Atchafalaya basin afoot, albeit with difficulty. It was west of the terrace margins where natural conditions--drainage, soils, natural

vegetation, and the like--were sufficiently different that the Cajuns were forced again to adapt to new natural conditions to find a viable mode of living. This, of course, refers to the prairies of southwestern Louisiana.

The Prairie

Prairie means tall grassland, specifically bluestem, with lesser amounts of watergrass and switchgrass, wildflowers in season, shrubs that die back in winter, altogether a changing scene throughout the year. The European invasion effected great changes, so that the old native vegetation remains only in spots, as along ditch banks. There are introduced crops and plants such as carpetgrass and johnson grass, the latter now the worst wild plant in the state. There were trees in the prairie along the major streams, gallery forests so dense as to divide the great prairie into a number of named smaller prairies (see map). It is notable that many early travellers in the prairies were reminded of the sea sufficiently to mention it. Wind ripples across the tall grass suggested waves; clumps of trees were islands; indentations in the trees became coves. Place names are reminders of the grass-tree relationship that may now be gone: Pine Island, Church Point, Long Point, Robert's Cove, for example.

To reiterate, there was not a southwestern prairie in Louisiana, but rather a series of them, set off by forest growth that bounds the major streams cutting across the grasslands. There is a Faquetique, a Mamou, Calcasieu, Sabine, Vermilion, Mermentau, Plaquimine, Opelousas, Grand, and many other smaller named prairies. A claypan largely

impervious to water or roots underlies the topsoil except where the larger streams such as the Mermentau, Calcasieu, Nezpique, Plaquemine Brule have breached it, the claypan, and permitted the growth of a decidious gallery forest and left deposits of productive alluvial soils. Between the major streams are smaller ones occupying old Red River channels that do not breach the claypan or carry a bounding forest. Also in the open praire are shallow, intermittent streams or coulees in addition to shallow, round ponds, platin and marais, that may have water seasonally and support a growth of trees. Ponds which are only seasonally filled are called baygalls by English-speaking settlers, perhaps due to the bay trees frequently found around them.

Particularly in the southwestern section of the prairies are groups of so-called pimple mounds, up to 10 feet high and 300 feet in basal diameter. Their origin is still not fully understood. They have been ascribed to burrowing animals, wallowing bison, springs of water, and even insects. Their tops rise above the coastal marsh where they have been carried down by general coastal submergence.

Long before highways or railroads, the major streams were the significant routes of travel and transport. Before the age of steam, wind-powered schooners ascended the Mermentau and other rivers to collect meat, hides, even fruit and other agricultural products for ports ranging from Galveston and New Orleans to Central America, thus providing Prairie Cajuns something of a world perspective. Even into the petroleum age of the twentieth century when competing with railroad and highways, rivers have been important routes of transport. In the age prior to the commercial production of rice on a large scale, the

Cajuns lived in the wooded areas along streams, rarely on the open prairie. Along the major streams was transportation, the best soils; there was wood and water; and there was protection from bad weather.

Early accounts of prairie weather vary widely, from laudatory exclamations regarding its perfections to complaints of burning summer heat and biting winter cold. Figures recorded in a later day reveal a temperature range normal for the latitude and the exposure of a natural grassland. Summers are hot, but the heat is tempered by prairie breezes. Winters can be mild, with clear skies, quite ideal, but the openness encourages an occasional norther that can be destructive to animal life such as cattle. The presence of east-west oriented cattle sheds, closed on the north side, attests to the destructiveness of such occasional winter storms. The native prairie grasses did not cure into nutrious winter feed, nor did introduced carpet grass, so that winters were a time of stress for grazing cattle and horses.

Sequent Occupance of the Prairie

The earliest Cajuns to occupy the western margins of the Mississippi River floodplain and the eastern-most prairies generally practiced the economy they had known on the Mississippi: cotton, sugar cane, okra, rice, corn, potatoes, and fruits. With a similar climate and equally productive soils, there was no decline in agriculture. The Spanish government to which they were subject continued to grant land according to the French practice of dividing river fronts into strips fronting on the streams and extending to the back swamp. But the Spaniards added the sitio, a rectangular grant of large and variable

size, normally not oriented to a stream nor to the cardinal directions.

Edging ever more into the open prairie, a newer pattern of settlement emerged, actually more resembling the solid arpent strips found near and on the Mississippi. The American government to which the Cajuns became subject continued to divide the land into strips (the American long-lot) but the strips were of equal width instead of tapered to fit the curvature of the stream like the French long-lot. The Cajuns lived in the wooded areas along the streams, cultivating the productive alluvial soils. If there were marais and platin in the adjacent open prairie, they grew crops of "providence" rice when the ponds carried water--or possibly they got nothing, hence the reliance on Providence.

Concurrent with the development of substantial agriculture in the Opelousas and Attakapas Post districts came an intensifying of cattle rearing. The open grasslands invited the establishment of vacheries or ranches. Increasingly both horses and cattle were of Spanish or Spanish-American origin, and there developed a relationship with Texas as a source of the stock as well as the methods and equipment used in handling it. There were annual round-ups and branding and even drives to posts or as far as markets on the Mississippi. There could be feeding of stock during times of stress in the plantation fringe to the east; on the larger prairie expanses to the west stock was totally dependent on the prairie grasses. Also, it was less possible to fence stock out of the crops than in the dominant agricultural areas to the east where French attitudes put the responsibility on stock owners, as opposed to the Anglo-Saxon American practice that it was the

agriculturalist's responsibilty to protect his crop from livestock. Distinctive pieux or post-and-rail fences were built and used, but they could be of little avail where stock rearing was carried on on a large scale.

Cattle rearing remains today, but the loss of range to agriculture, especially rice, has reduced its significance economically as well as much of the flamboyance of its practices. But in the non-agricultural coastal marshes much of the old ways of cattle rearing remains. At least within a very few years, long drives through the marsh brought the cattle to areas where the summer insects were less abundant. Only a few years ago, one rancher was reputed to own 40,000 head. I have read a news item saying trucks have replaced the long drives. If true, the change has cost much color.

But one aspect of the old range days remains: the Cajun love of horses and horse racing. Long after the rest of the country had abandoned horses in favor of automobiles, the streets of prairie towns were lined with horse-drawn buggies. Harness racing was ardently practiced and half-mile oval tracks could be discerned on air photos probably into the 1960s. Harness racing seems to have passed, but quarter-horse racing on straight quarter-mile tracks still commands devoted interest. Many Cajun jockeys have become nationally known.

Changes accelerated in the latter part of the nineteenth century. In 1880 the east-west rail connection was completed. It passed through Lafayette but not Opelousas, giving the former an impetus to growth not shared by the latter, which a branch line could not offset. The opening of the southwestern prairie, previously cattle country, led to

an invasion of Midwestern farmers and a new mechanized production of rice. In 1901 the discovery of oil near the new railroad town of Jennings brought an era of development that transcended all others in significance for the Prairie Cajuns.

The Landscape of Mechanized Rice Production

The completion of the railroad across the prairie in 1880 was the initial cause for the agricultural development of the previously lightly used western portion of the prairie. Prior to this time the area was chiefly the major producer of range cattle and horses. The railroad seeking more business and promoters seeking settlers actively advertised through brochures and other means the cheapness and productivity of virgin prairie lands. The chief appeal was to Midwestern farmers who saw an opportunity to live in a mild climate on a productive prairie farm for a reasonable cost. The chief area available was lightly occupied by a grazing economy. When the United States acquired Louisiana, the Land Office honored the French and Spanish land grants. When the land was surveyed the American system of square township and mile sections was superimposed around existing private claims. Roads followed section lines, with square turnings at corners. The clusters of house, barn, and planted trees representing individual farmsteads adjoined a road, removed possibly a quarter mile from other farmsteads. And the houses and barns were not those familiar to the Prairie Cajuns, but rather replicas of what the settlers had known in the Midwest. Cajuns warned that the tall, narrow houses would succumb to the first strong wind. To complete the Midwest

prototype were small towns set on the railroad, identified across the prairie by the upward projection of clusters of rice mills and driers, the elevators of the Midwest, and, somewhat removed, the plain spire of a Protestant church.

The Midwestern farmers thought at first to transfer wholesale their corn-hog-small-grain economy. They experimented with rice, a crop with which they were totally unfamiliar. But they knew very well how to grow other grains such as wheat, barley, rye, and oats. But rice cannot be successfully grown without flooding, a new experience. The claypan beneath the topsoil proved well suited to holding water from irrigation, and initially the full-bodied streams provided a ready water source, although subsequently the rice farmers turned to wells. First the rice was cut and hauled in bundles in wagons and threshed with the steam-powered thresher. Then the power combine cut and threshed in one operation. Fields were levelled to simplify flooding, all most remote from "providence" rice for home consumption.

The Prairie Cajuns did not immediately adjust to the revolutionary changes. Too, natural increase in numbers and newcomers to the praires forced the excess to seek new areas in which to live and work. When the railway was completed in 1880 and the U.S. Government increased the disposal of public lands, the Cajuns as well as the Midwesterners were bidders for participation in the modernized mode of rice production. Even more an incentive to movement was the rise of industry, shipbuilding and petrochemicals, that boomed in Lake Charles and the Texas cities as far west as Houston during World War I and later.

However, it was not until after World War II that the Cajuns began

to play a full part in the petroleum industry. When the initial well was brought in near Jennings in 1901, it was Anglos from Texas who were primarily involved. Drilling crews were brought in from Texas and Oklahoma. It was said that the rural Cajuns were not accustomed to hard labor at regular hours. Signs in Cajun's restaurants read "Texas coffee." Apparently the term "coonass" arose at this time. While this is not strongly derogatory, it certainly is not complimentary. It needed the demands for labor and the stresses of World War II to draw the Cajuns fully into the petroleum industry, even to managerial ranks. The rural-to-urban movement so marked everywhere has thus affected the Prairie Cajuns. And even the rural dwellers on the little general farms are drawn by radio and TV into the national culture.

The Spring, 1987 issue of Louisiana History carries an article, "Changeless Cajuns: Nineteenth-Century Reality or Myth?" by Lawrence E. Estaville, Jr., in which he questions the absorptive power of Cajun culture to retain their language and culture and at the same time to digest intrusive peoples and elements. In my own experience of nearly sixty years, the evidence indicates a loss of Cajun French speakers. An LSU secretary some forty years old was born in a small railroad town in prairie Louisiana. She did not learn English until she went to school. Her niece and nephew of the same community speak no French, and they are current middle-school graduates. A former French-speaking community on Lake Verret now has no Francophones under forty. On the other hand, a town-born Cajun I encoutered many years ago on a shrimp platform had to learn French in order to work there. He probably would need only English at the present time.

In concluding this study one should judge just how well the Cajuns adapted their mode of life to the new environment they found in the grasslands of southwestern Louisiana. Nothing in their background prepared them, either in Acadia or on the Mississippi in Louisiana. Along the major streams crossing the prairie they found good alluvial soils, wood, and an avenue of transport. On the open grasslands they encountered shallow ponds that might produce rice. Far more significant was the development of a grazing economy involving cattle and horses. The Cajuns were not great cattlemen in the sense that Texans were, but they succeeded economically and they built an enduring passion for horses. They lived substantially and securely.

The intrusion of farmers from the Midwest, eventually to mechanize rice production, brought Cajuns into a new era of farming, even as it ended the extensive grazing of unfenced prairie. And the excess from a high rural birthrate moved to towns to find employment in industry. What is left of the old rural ways is strongest on the smaller farms, where advanced modes of cultivation and stock rearing have transformed the old practices.

The solidest bastions of Cajundom in Prairie Louisiana are the clusters of small farms along the major streams. Continuity with the past remains in foods, games, music, and the church, actually much the same categories as in other American rural societies. Crops of corn and cotton and vegetables are grown according to approved methods, and there are fenced cattle. French may be the prevailing tongue, but the significance of speaking unaccented English is realized by those venturing out into the world in a professional capacity. While the

Cajuns are solidly Roman Catholic, that is no great distinction; it cannot instill a cohesiveness such as preserves the Amish and Mennonites. Regardless of the fate of Cajun French, there will remain a viable heritage of how to live on the prairie.

CULTURAL OVERVIEW OF THE GULF COAST WETLANDS

Glen Pitre

This cultural overview of the southern Louisiana wetlands is divided into three sections. Section I, the Place, describes the three basic ecosystems in the area and cultural responses to them: a) the natural levees of the Bayous and the River (not true wetlands themselves but surrounded by them); b) the marshes (wet grasslands) and associated landforms along the coast; and c) the swamps (forrested wetlands) usually subject to riverine flooding.

Section II, the Seasons, is organized around traditional occupations and therefore, because most were seasonal, around the calendar. Winter was a time to harvest wildlife. The floods of spring allowed access to the swamps and the trees that grew there. Summer's good weather encouraged work upon the sea. Fall was harvest time: sugarcane from the fields, cattle from the ranges, and oysters from their beds.

Section III, the People, outlines the mix of groups that comprise "Cajun" as well as the other, distinct groups which coexist with them in the Louisiana wetlands. Events that have drastically altered local lifestyles in this century are examined. Customs and institutions, current and archaic, are surveyed.

SECTION I

THE PLACE

THE BAYOUS AND THE RIVER

The Streams

The whole of southeast Louisiana is alluvial in character, made of silt carried down from a third of North America spread into a deltaic plain. The Mississippi River has in geological time added foot by foot to its course, inch by inch to the elevation of its banks with each spring flood. By every five hundred to a thousand years, it has done the job so well that during its annual overflow it finds a shorter course to the Gulf, and starts the process of building anew.

The abandoned path will continue to carry a reduced flow. Over time it will narrow, shallow up, and eventually begin to erode away from its mouth. When surpassed by the infant course of the river, the old one becomes a "distributary". The opposite of a tributary, which flows into a larger stream, a distributary flows out of the bigger stream, into the Gulf, a lake, or to further sub-divide into more distributaries.

In Louisiana, the distributary is called a "bayou". (In truth, some tributaries are called bayous and some distributaries are called rivers. We speak here of the archtypical bayou.)

Bayou Lafourche ("The Fork") leaves the Mississippi River at Donaldsonville and flows to the Gulf 120 miles southeast. About half way down, at Thibodaux, Bayou Terrebonne splits off from the Lafourche

for a more southerly course. At Houma, it nearly touches the spot where Little Bayou Black turns 270 degrees to a westerly direction and changes name to Big Bayou Black. Below Houma Bayou Petit Caillou splits from the Terrebonne.

As one approaches the Gulf the myriad streams form an ever-widening fan.

The Levees

Levees, the raised banks of a stream, have always been important in Louisiana. Man has built levees in Louisiana certainly since the first European colonization, if not before. The walls of dirt thrown up to keep a bayou or river within its banks have been the object of great efforts and the source of great controversy. Since 1927, through the U S Army Corps of Engineers, Louisiana's levees have become a national priority.

But such man-made levees are only part of the picture. Each of them was built upon the "natural levees" of the same streams. In the cycle of annual flooding, a river rises because it is carrying more water. For the same reason, it also moves faster, and the faster current enables it to carry a heavy load of silt.

Once the river overflows its banks, however, its speed decreases. The sediment suspended in the water begins to settle out. The most and largest particles fall right there near the bank of the stream. Further away, fewer and finer particles settled. Further still, fewer and finer silt are deposited.

This pattern of sedimentation causes higher "frontlands" near the stream gradually receding to lower "backlands" further away. In addition to elevation, the coarser particles of silt mean frontlands usually consist of a sandy loam ideal for farming. The fine particles dropped onto the backlands produce clay, or sometimes a mucky earth called "gumbo", neither a friend to the plow.

Louisiana's original French method of land surveying was based on neither the metes and bounds of the British nor the township and range grid of the Americans. Instead, land was deeded by frontage (on a stream) and depth (or distance back from the stream). The standard depth was often forty "arpents", (a French measure equaling 192 feet) or about a mile and a half in all. One's property got wider or narrower towards the back depending if he was on the outside or inside curve of a stream.

This method of surveying fit extremely well the local terrain. Each landowner was sure to get a piece of the choicest land near the stream for home and fields, some of the mid range land to pasture his livestock, and on his backlands access to the products of the swamp or marsh. On the other hand, any contributions or servitudes required from the property owner for roads (which followed the stream's bank) or man-made levees (likewise) fell fairly on each property owner.

The Civil Law provisions of forced heirship as practiced in Louisiana provide that inherited property be divided equally among all the children. To do this fairly meant to divide the frontage by the appropriate number, and have each resulting strip continue to stretch

from the stream to a depth of forty arpents. As property was divided and divided again, interesting anomalies developed. Pieces of property 96' by 7,680' are very common. Properties 7,680' by as little as 24' can be found.

Development usually began (and often ended) at the front, where land was higher, soil richer, and access easier to the natural highway of the bayou itself and later the roads that were usually built on each of its banks. The archtypical town of Louisiana's bayou country is the "line village", named for its shape as it hugs the banks of a stream. Usually with no downtown, it represents the occupied frontlands of a multitude of separate properties.

On Bayou Lafourche, where this pattern is perhaps most pronounced, La Highway 1 on the right bank has been called the world's longest main street, with few breaks in settlement for a hundred miles of its length. One story tells how a man left Thibodaux in a Model A Ford to tell his brother in Golden Meadow fifty miles south that World war I had ended. When he got there, his brother already knew. The word had passed from house to house faster than he could drive.

Rural Settlement

Farmsteads were divided into "plantations" and "habitations", depending on their size and whether their emphasis was on cash crops or food crops. Plantations might encompass not only a great frontage, but also a depth of more than forty arpents. In the bayou country, sugarcane was usually the cash crop. A discussion of the operations of a typical sugar plantation appears in a later chapter.

Canals

The already intricate system of natural bayous was supplemented by canals. In the early days the canals were hand dug by gangs of slaves. Where available, slaves were replaced by the even cheaper labor of newly arrived immigrants. The mule drawn scoop was a great technological advance. Much later, the steam dredge would turn canal digging into a mania that would endanger the very ground of southern Louisiana.

In the early days one left the Mississippi at New Orleans heading west by way of the Westwego Canal into Lake Cataouatche which connected to Lake Salvador. From there one took Harang's canal or the Cut Off canal to Bayou Lafourche. After 10 miles upstream on Bayou Lafourche, one headed west through Bellanger's canal through Lake Fields and Long Lake into Bayou Terrebonne. After a few miles up Bayou Terrebonne, it was west on Barrow's canal into Little Bayou Black which led into Big Bayou Black which led all the way to the Atchafalaya's confluence with Bayou Teche at Tiger Island (later Brashear, then Morgan City).

Each of these canals had a toll. Sometimes their proprietor doubled his income by also charging a toll on a bridge over his canal. Others made their income by hauling the cordelle, the harnassed mule that walked the bayou bank, towing a boat.

Some entrepreneurs built bridges designed to interfere with navigation, Mr. Perry who owned Perry's bridge on the Vermilion south of Abbeville did nearly as well with stevedoring as with bridge tolls. Since his bridge was built to not allow boats under it, all waterborne

freight had to be unloaded and reloaded at his settlement. Nearly a century later, Governor Earl Long would use the same idea on a much grander scale with a bridge over the Mississippi River at Baton Rouge.

"There were no boats with motors in the old days, I saw that, I was a young boy. The people had canots, you called it canots. It was a boat with a square fantail in the back with a governail made of wood with a sail on top. When a man would go fish oysters down the bayou he'd use his sail. If there was no wind he'd have to pushpole. He'd pushpole the boat up the bayou, it might take all day. Then he'd get to a man with a horse. He'd take a long rope [cordelle] and pull the boat by the mast, you see there were no motors He'd take that boat from the Robinson Canal and bring it up to Houma with a horse and cordelle so the man could deliver his oysters."

- WILSON DOMANGUE

The Coast

Unlike most of the Atlantic seaboard and the rest of the Gulf littoral, southern Louisiana was settled not from the coast inland, but rather from inland toward the coast. The Mississippi River was the avenue of colonization. If you left the Mississippi to travel down Bayou Lafourche, you may have been moving toward the Gulf, but you were also entering the Lafourche Interior, as the area came to be officially designated.

High land was (and is) scarce along the coast. Hundreds of square miles of marshland, described on old maps as 'Trembling and Impassable Prairie', were criss-crossed with innumerable bayous. Near the coast, few of these streams had natural levees high or broad enough to encourage settlement. Fewer streams still had the depth for passage of more than a dug-out pirogue or a skiff. It was a terrain that allowed almost no agriculture and precious little husbandry.

Land high enough for settlement takes several distinct shapes in coastal Louisiana. Barrier islands, some hugging the coast, others at a considerable distance from it, form a broken semi-circle around the "toe" of boot-shaped Louisiana. Linear ridges known as chênières ("oak groves") or côteaux ("ridges") parallel the coast along the shoreline or sometimes many miles inland. It is in southwest Louisiana where the system of chenieres is best developed, though Chênière Caminada, in the east, is perhaps the most famous.

Though there are several competing theories on how the barrier islands and associated chenieres were formed, most hypotheses are based on the action of the extreme rises and falls of the sea level, and thus

retreats and advances of the coast lines, during various ice ages. Most of the material of Louisiana's beaches comes from eroded headlands of the shifting deltas of the Mississippi River, the sands redistributed and reshaped by the tide and waves. (Wells & Peterson, Atlantic & Gulf Coastal Barriers, National Wetlands Research Center.)

Towns like Leeville, Dulac, and Falgout's Canal grew somewhat inland, a respectful ten or twenty miles from the coast. Others, like Grand Isle, Cheniere Caminada, and Cheniere au Tigre, were near the water's edge but on higher ground that was held together by oak trees. The strategies were different but the peril feared the same: the hurricanes that can strike Louisiana's coast from June to October. Neither strategy was completely effective. The coastal marshes are dotted with forlorn, untended cemetaries, often all that remains of towns that were so ravaged by storm that they were abandoned.

For most, the draw of the coast in spite of these obstacles was the living to be made fishing the bays, estuaries and Gulf; and hunting, trapping and herding in the marshes. At least by mid-nineteenth century, Louisiana's beaches were becoming resorts, summer refuges from pestilential cities. Other residents, like Jean Lafitte himself, made the coast their home because it offered near-inaccessable lairs near the crossroads of the Mississippi Valley and Gulf of Mexico shipping lanes.

Hurricanes

"The Hurricane of 1909 there was 7 feet of water in my store here. There were 300 people that drowned below Madison Canal. There were plenty homes and people there. Around 300 people drowned in 1909."

- JUNIUS LAPEYROUSE

Throughout Louisiana's recorded history there has been an ebb and flow of the southern limits of settlement, caused and dated by the storms that have battered her. The 1909 hurricane was a perfect example.

It is not that local residents are unduly fearful of bad weather, or even unwilling to abide the inconveniences of flood. Indeed it was a common feature of houses near the coast that they had four trap doors in the floor, one in each corner of the house. These were not for human escape but rather to let water in. If a house filled with water it was less likely to think itself a boat and float away.

In 1909, however, many farms and fishermen's cabins were simply washed off the map of lower Terrebonne Parish in a hurricane that, according to those who remember both, was much worse than the storm of a similar path in 1926.

Once the storm had passed, many of the area's residents were simply dead. Survivors had few possessions left to encourage them to stay, and undoubtably nightmares that encouraged them to go. Salt water flooded fields would require two or three years of curing before they could again produce crops. Sometimes storm erosion compounded the more

gradual subsidence to insure the fields would never feel the plow again. The jumbled titles of vacated lands did little to encourage their resettlement.

The hurricanes mentioned below were named by the year in which they came; or, later, by the given names of women; or in most recent times, by women's and men's names. But in the last century, the great storms took their names from the villages they wiped out. The Last Island Hurricane and the Cheniere Hurricane are discussed in the chapter on settlements. Others, of more recent vintage, are covered below.

1915

A hurricane destroyed Leeville (not to be confused with Leesville), a town that had been largely settled by refugees of the Cheniere Caminada hurricane. The local Woodsmen of the World hall was the building that saved many of the survivors. The storm destroyed the local orange groves and rice fields; today one would be hard pressed to find any kind of tree on the site.

Leeville was all but abandoned after the storm but received a new lease on life a dozen years later when Texaco made the first oil discovery in southeast Louisiana there. Within months the area was a forest of drilling derricks. Rows and rows of company houses went up. Leeville had phone service long before much larger towns in the region.

Today Leeville, though still an oil field in its own right, is primarily a staging area for offshore exploration and production, with its major port and heliport.

1926

This hurricane flooded most of coastal Terrebonne Parish just a year before the '27 flood inundated its more inland reaches.

A Chauvin woman remembers the hurricane when she was but a child. Too young to fully feel the human misery, her greatest loss was the drowning of her pet pig, Noonie, by the storm. Having raised it from the bottle, the pig would follow her around, her constant companion. She cried not for her destroyed home or drowned relatives, but for her lost pig.

Three days later, as waters continued to recede, her father came upon a floating pirogue. In it was Noonie, quite alive, hungry and happy to see them. The girl's tears were now of joy to be reacquainted with her playmate.

The joy was shortlived. Too many people had lost too much. Relief boats were slow to alleviate the suffering. Larders of stored food had been ruined; livestock had all been drowned. Except for Noonie.

More than a half century after the fact, an old woman cries as she tells of a young girl's pig that gave its life to feed the starving.

Audrey

By 1957, radio, TV, and advances in meteorology meant early warnings of hurricanes were available. It did not mean the warnings were heeded. In Cameron Parish especially, in the extreme southwest corner of Louisiana, hundreds drowned when they did not follow the evacuation orders.

Thirty years have not erased the memories. Cameron residents are quicker than most now to respond to storm warnings. Hurricane Audrey has entered the folklore, even as the subject of one of the very few Cajun songs that commemorates an historical event, Alex Broussard's THE YEAR OF '57.

Dans l'année de cinquante-sept,
Dans les mèches de Cameron,
De la mer, il y a venu une lame,
Qu'a couvert le sud de l'état.

In the year of fifty-seven,
In the marshes of Cameron,
From the sea there came a wave,
That covered the southern part of the state.

Betsy

In 1965, Hurricane Betsy was moving up the Atlantic coast from the Carribean when it looped 270 degrees and cut across Florida into the Gulf of Mexico. Rebuilding quickly, when it hit land again, it virtually wiped away Grand Isle, then followed Bayou Lafourche up its entire length before veering north and east.

Early evacuation of low lying areas kept loss of life to a minimum, but the property damage was staggering. Reminders of the power of nature's unleashed fury were everywhere. Seventy foot shrimp boats lay on their sides blocking the highway. The two stories of an

appliance store in Cut Off were seemingly intact, only now side by side instead of one above the other. It would be weeks before power, fresh water, gas, and telephones could be restored.

This author remembers being a ten year old boy when Betsy hit, feeling the whole house moving inch by inch under the force of the wind; hearing the roof being blown away, piece by piece; watching the designs that were formed as water blotted through the ceiling tiles; and finally being bundled in a blanket, and during the calm eye of the storm running, running fast before the wind came back, to a neighbor's stronger brick house, the family photo album and a bag full of canned goods clutched in my arms. Only half-understanding but fully afraid, we waited for the moment when the eye would pass. We had heard the stories; we knew what to expect. Wind doubly strong, and from the opposite direction: you had made it through half the storm, but the worst was yet to come.

Camille

Hurricane Camille, in 1970, is best known for the mayhem it caused on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. On its way there, however, it caused considerable wind and water damage in southeast Louisiana, especially in the parishes of Plaquemine and St. Bernard. In the former, little but the levee tops were above water.

Juan

Hurricane Juan, in October 1985, was a freakish storm that caused much property damage less by great power than by erratic pattern. Rather than hitting the coast with full fury and disipating as it moved

inland, as is normal, Juan chose to be coy. It hit the coast, stalled, retreated back into the Gulf where it rebuilt. It struck the coast again, and hovered. It was a wet storm, a very wet storm. As it lingered it dropped ton after ton of rain. Worst hit was south Lafourche where an uncompleted ring levee system proved little help and where several key pumps failed.

Hundreds of homes were flooded. The water rose so fast in some places that even cars were unable to be removed in time. Water moccasins and other snakes were found inside homes for months afterwards. People were reminded of the subtle but sometimes critical changes in elevation between the natural levees of the bayou and the lower backlands, a distinction that drainage and development projects had lured them into forgetting.

If nothing else, Juan can be credited with making one nursery rhyme come true. This author was working in his office, which overhangs Bayou Lafourche, during the flooding that was the aftermath of Juan. Something glimpsed in my peripheral vision caused me to look up, and out the office window. The moon had risen early, well before the sunset. Just as in Mother Goose, a cow was jumping over the moon. All right, more floating than jumping, but still it was a rather unsettling sight.

I left my desk at a run for closer investigation outside. To my relief I saw that the cow was in a sling, one of many such cattle being airlifted from flooded pastures by helicopter.

Last Island (Isles Dernières)

In nineteenth century New Orleans, mid-fall through mid-spring was known as the "commercial season", when business might be reasonably conducted. In the warmer months, anyone who could afford to left the city. Dengue, malaria, cholera, and especially yellow fever were deadly, recurring scourges. In some summers the percentage of the city's residents killed by "Yellow Jack" was measured in double digits. Since non-fatal cases gave immunity, it was also known as the "Stranger's Disease." In ante-bellum New Orleans, booming queen of the River, many a stranger set foot on her docks who would not survive his first summer.

Yellow fever was no less grave when suffered in the countryside, but at least in rural areas it was easier to isolate oneself and limit contacts. Before the discovery of how these diseases are transmitted (the Anopheles mosquito for malaria, its cousin the Aedes Aegypti for dengue and Yellow Fever, and fecal contamination of food or water for cholera), it was believed that noxious vapors could cause these maladies. (Indeed "mal aria" means "bad air" in Italian.) The open, poorly drained sewers of New Orleans at the time, fetid in the summer heat, surely produced an odor that would convince one of their unhealthiness.

Last Island was one of the resorts that catered to those who could afford to leave the city of New Orleans in its summer months. One could travel by packet steamer to Houma, or take the railroad on the spur

that left the Southern Pacific main line at Shriever. From Houma a boat could be hired or, for the adventurous, the voyage to Last Island could be made on horse back at low tide.

The arrival of the railroad had prepared the way for large scale development of the island's tourist industry. By 1856, plans had been drawn for a large and lavish hotel. It was not to be. In 1857, a hurricane struck the island that washed away many of the guest cottages and drowned dozens of the vacationers there. The search for a daughter feared drowned after that storm is the subject of the classic short novel by Lafcadio Hearn, CHITA.

The hotel that was never built entered the folklore. Now, when local residents tell of the Last Island Hurricane, it usually includes an account of that huge, never-existent building being washed into Terrebonne Bay.

Today Last Island has been devastated by erosion. Now a string of low islets, much of it is covered during high tide.

Timbalier Island

Timbalier Island lies across the pass from Last Island. Its name, and its fame, come not from resorts that were or might have been. Granted as a concession in 1729 to Sylvain Filiosa, this self styled Robindson Crusoe, lived alone on an island off what was still a forbidding and poorly charted coast.

When a fleet of native pirogues visited his island, with warriors armed and painted, he was convinced of their malicious intent. The cannibalism practiced by several Louisiana tribes was no doubt a worrisome prospect. But he did not lose his head.

Filiosa had a large kettle outside his hut. As the Indians closed in he turned his drum over and began to bang on it. Loud. Over and over. His attackers stopped, mesmerized. The sound of his timbalier (kettle drum) was probably the loudest thing they had ever heard short of thunder or hurricane wind. Whether they fled in fear, or left in respect for a man who could make such a sound, it will never be recorded.

Grand Terre

Across Barataria Pass from Grand Isle sits her sister island, Grande Terre. Inaccessable by road, a century and three-quarters ago the sandy flat was a bustling, prosperous community, the headquarters of Jean Lafitte and the men and women that Andrew Jackson called his "hellish banditti."

Space is insufficient here to do more than summarize the exploits of this amazing gentleman. His reign began by settling the disagreements between long-time local smugglers and full-time buccaneers who, evicted from Carribean islands by the British, had become interlopers on the local scene.

Traveling to South America, he obtained "letters of marque", the free lance naval commissions used by all countries of the day to supplement their navies. True, the commissions he obtained to prey on

British and Spanish shipping came from such nascent states as the Republic of Cartagena, at the time recognized as independent by no one else in the world. But they were enough, at least in his own eyes, to avoid the hated designation pirate.

With goods purchased only for the cost of their capture (with such operations often underwritten by the value of the captured ship alone), then smuggled in past customs duty free, it is no wonder that Lafitte could soon undercut any price offered by merchants operating legally. The creoles, not yet used to American rule anyway, were his first eager customers. In time Lafitte's merchandise was being distributed throughout the Mississippi valley to westerners who resented the high tariffs the federal government imposed to aid eastern manufacturers.

Lafitte grew to be the largest employer in Louisiana, with a reputed 4000 people on his payroll. Besides his Grande Terre base, he had facilities on Grand Isle, Little Temple, and Bayou Barataria; warehouses at Donaldsonville and slave barracoons on Bayou Rafael; and the famous blacksmith shop and perhaps dozens of other fronts and warehouses in New Orleans and elsewhere.

With power came audacity. When then Louisiana governor Claiborne offered a $500 reward for the capture of Lafitte, Lafitte offered a $5000 reward for the capture of the governor.

At the close of 1814, a British fleet and army were poised for the capture of New Orleans. It would be the last battle in a war that, unknown to those at hand, had "ended" by treaty some months before. The British offered Lafitte a commission, but he turned them down.

Partly in fear that he would reconsider, and partly for greed (sailors and captains of the American navy received commissions on prizes, just like Lafitte's men), Lafitte's Grande Terre base was captured and sacked by a small fleet of American gunboats. In a complicated bargain for amnesty, Lafitte provided General Andrew Jackson with the powder, flints, artillery and artillerists that most historians agree were decisive to the American victory.

After the battle Lafitte moved his operations to Galveston Island on the Texas coast. Turmoil within the government of the newly formed Republic of Mexico denied him the official sanction he was hoping for there. A hurricane destroyed his Galvezton base several years later. Lafitte disappeared from history, some say to die a pauper of a fever in the Yucatan. Others claimed he lived well and to a ripe old age in St. Louis.

Not all of his men left for Texas with Lafitte. The Chighizola family of Grand Isle trace their family tree to one of his captains, Nez Coupé ("Cut Nose", obviously better than "Cut Throat", if he is your ancestor). Many Bayou Lafourche families tell of great-great-grandfather's friendship with Vincent Gambie, also known as Gambie Lafitte. Where the tales have been long passed down there is usually an ancestor who gave or received this or that favor from the great Jean Lafitte.

In the 1842 the U.S. government built Fort Livingston on Grande Terre to protect the Barataria water route into New Orleans. Taken over by Confederates when Louisiana seceeded from the Union, it was not to fire a shot in anger throughout the Civil War. Afterward it lapsed

into obsolescence and was eventually abandoned. Erosion has undermined portions of the brick walls; large parts of the structure have collapsed into the sea. What remains can easily be seen from the Coast Guard station on the eastern tip of Grand Isle.

Today Grand Terre is home to the shorebirds that nest on its beaches; an experiment station of the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries; and the numerous cattle which are grazed there. Like the human residents, the cattle can only come and go from the island by boat and barge.

Chênière Caminada

The Chênière Caminada, across Caminada Pass from Grand Isle, was a bustling community of nearly 3000 by the early 1890s. Shrimp, fish, crabs, and oysters brought in by the Cheniere's fishermen supplied the tables of New Orleans.

On October 1st of 1893 a hurricane blew in from the Gulf. By morning over half the people in the village had drowned.

The survivors became refugees, to resettle inland. At Leeville, ten miles up Bayou Lafourche, many of them would drown in another storm, eighteen years later. Some moved north to cross-river from New Orleans, into a developing suburb called Westwego.

One story has a certain Mr. Cheramie being brought up the Bayou on a relief boat after the Chênière Hurricane. He looked up from the rail and saw his house in one piece perched on the bank where the receding water had left it. He had himself put ashore, moved in, and thereby founded the town of Golden Meadow.

Further up the Bayou an estate was being broken up just south of the cut off canal that provided a short cut to New Orleans. It was the tradition on Bayou Lafourche in those days to paint the front of one's house, facing the Bayou, with the gaudiest paint one could find or afford. Refugees who had lost everything could little afford paint, so they white-washed the fronts of their houses. At the time, the stretch of bayou where the Guidry family lived became "la côte des Guidrys", the Heberts lived at "côte des Heberts". The storm refugees in their white-washed houses lived on "la côte blanche", the "white coast."

After the storm, there were books published about it, the best known being Chênière Camanada, or The Wind of Death. Jean Henriot, a resident of the chênière and unofficial poet laureate of the area, penned a long narrative poem in French to commemorate the disaster. Embedded in its rhyming verses are first hand accounts of acute human suffering. More recently a play by Max Quetermous, This is My Land, These Are My People portrays the suffering brought on by the hurricane.

But perhaps the best records of the cataclysm, certainly the most poignant, rest in the oral tradition of the storm survivors' descendants.

People today living on lower Bayou Lafourche, and many in the West Bank towns across the river from New Orleans, still share the experiences that were handed down from grandparents about the storm that took so many lives and changed forever the lives of the people of Chênière Caminada.

Like the story of Cledemere Lafont, washed out to sea, holding onto the front door of his house, as a raft. When by happy circumstance a schooner spotted him and picked him up two weeks later, he was unconscious, close to death; he was naked, his clothes ripped from his body by the waves; his skin was blistered, burned by the sun and pickled by the sea; but he was still clutching the door.

Like the story of the Chênière church bell, cast from donated silver, that rang throughout the storm as it was buffeted by the wind, thereby providing solace to the dying and to those who feared they were. With the death of the town, the bishop in New Orleans wished to move the bell to another parish. Before he could, local nightriders stole and buried it. Years later it was retrieved, to be used at the church on Grand Isle, where its peels might still be heard by the ghosts that haunt Caminada Bay.

Every family has its stories. This author remembers the tales told by his grandfather, who was a boy of thirteen when the storm hit. He survived by literally tying himself with rope to the upper branches of an oak tree. When the storm surge, the "tidal wave", reached so high it found him up there in that tree, it washed a four year old sister from his arms, never to be seen again.

This David Pitre lost four brothers and sisters that night. One, Lea, was a girl of twenty who had been looking forward to her wedding, scheduled for a week away. She was found, drowned, hanging by her long hair that had become tangled in the branches of a tree. The wedding was delayed for mourning. Then, as was the custom, the intended groom married her sister.

Chênière Au Tigre

South of Abbeville and Lafayette, just off the coast, lies Cheniere au Tigre (Oak Ridge of the Panther). Its proximity to the Gulf, yet its relative isolation from settled areas further inland, made it an ideal base for activities of questionable legality.

In the 1840s it was a training camp for fillibusterers, the young adventurers intent on wresting Texas away from Mexico. Even earlier, it is said, it was the transfer site for human contraband, an unholy meeting ground for the two men who are arguably the two most famous figures in Louisiana history-- Jean Lafitte and Jim Bowie.

The U.S. Constitution protested the importation of slaves only until 1808. Subsequently, Congress instituted legislation which forbade the importation of slaves after January 1, 1808. When that year came, the rush to turn the whole lower Mississippi Valley into cotton and sugar plantations was on. The price for slaves rose very high. With good prices and an eager market, it remained for the unscrupulous only to find a way to "launder" the contraband, that the illegally imported slaves might be sold legitimately.

Here is how the Lafitte-Bowie partnership supposedly worked. Bowie, working from Chênière au Tigre, would "capture" the slaves his partner Lafitte was trying to smuggle into the country. He would then turn them in to the government for a reward. Government policy was to auction off such contraband to the highest bidder.

Even if any would-be bidder did not fear the Bowie brothers (remember the size of the knife named after them), he could hardly ignore the wide-ranging power of the Lafittes. Jim Bowie was able to buy back for a song the slaves he had already turned in for a reward. Furthermore, now they were legal and could be sold openly for the high prices planters were willing to pay.

Chênière au Tigre was battered by too many hurricanes. The extensive road building that began in Louisiana in the twenties passed it by. Though canals have made access easier, it is still only reachable by boat. Though it has many camps, active for hunters, fishermen, or simply vacationers, it can no longer claim full time residents.

Coastal Erosion

The natural breakdown of the levee structures of the abandoned paths of the Mississippi River, while providing the material that built the barrier islands and chenieres, is also the key to their destruction. The land is temporary in coastal Louisiana, not only in terms of geological time, but also readily evident in a single lifetime.

Areas that living men remember as prairies are now open lakes. Fields that once grew sugar cane proclaim their ancestry with the pattern of rows still evident, though all that grows now is marsh grass. One can see whole ridges of dead oak trees in Lafourche Parish, whole forests of dead cypress in Terrebonne.

Never again will orange trees grow in Leeville, nor sugar cane on Grand Isle. Not only will no one ever ride out to Last Island on horseback at low tide again, but in another generation, there will be no Last Island to go out to.

A Houma Indian woman lives at Isle a Jean Charles, not a true island, but rather a high spot in the marsh. It is the same village where she was born in a palmetto hut ninety-odd years before. She is a "traiteuse" (folk healer, literally "treater"), but little practices her craft today. On account of her age? No, she still feels strong and healthy. People nowadays prefer doctors? Not that; every day she has sick who call on her. Why then? Because the plants from which she makes her medicines will no longer grow there.

Natural erosion has been hastened by development. Flood control projects prevent the River's load of silt from being deposited anew each year on the banks. Navigation channels and jetties short circuit the formation of the deltaic birdfoot, sluicing the silt, washed away topsoil from the heartland of America, into the irrecoverable depths off the continental shelf.

Oil and gas exploration and the canals it has left behind have promoted salt water intrusion, killing many fresh and brackish marshes. Abandoned reclamation projects typically become geometrically shaped lakes rather than the marshland they had previously been. Development along the coast weakens the resiliency of the already fragile beaches by destroying beachgrass, flattening dunes, and creating new inlets for storm surges to enter through.

Aesthetic and ecological concerns aside, this erosion is serious because it weakens hurricane defense, reduces the amount of ecosystem for trapping and especially seafood production, and reduces area from which oil revenues can be claimed.

Land loss robs Louisiana of about 40 square miles of land each year, and the trend is increasing. (National Geographic, 8/83). In Terrebonne Parish alone 6000 acres per year disappear under salt water.

THE SWAMPS

Louisiana's terrain of so much low, flat, fertile land, much of it subject to seasonal flooding, has allowed the development of large areas of swamp. In the Cajun French, there are several words for swamp depending on what trees grows there. The difference between a cyprière (cypress swamp) and a saulière (willow swamp) is an important distinction to someone who makes his living there.

By far the largest and most important of Louisiana's swamps is the Atchafalaya Basin, cutting a wide swath down the center of the southern part of the state. It remains today America's largest swamp.

During the antebellum plantation boom, agriculture was extended even to the marginal lands of the Basin. By the Civil War, however, the floods brought on by the Mississippi shifting so much of its flow from the main channel to the Atchafalaya were forcing people out. Those who remained were converting to a life of fishing rather than agriculture.

Late in the nineteenth century fishermen from the upper Mississippi Valley moved into the Atchafalaya basin. They brought with them such inovations as the camp boat, a houseboat that could be towed to any desired location, and the tow car, essentially a floating cage for fish. The tow car alone revolutionized fishing in the Basin, for no longer was the market limited to local consumption.

The two most common methods of fishing in the swamp are the trot line and the hoop net. Trot lines are long lines with short lines attached to them at intervals. On the end of each of these shorter lines, or "stagings", is a hook baited with pieces of fish, frogs, etc.

Hoop nets are long cylindrical nets held open by wooden hoops. They are used much like a trap. Fish enter and cannot find their way out again.

Various other types of nets and wooden traps are also used to catch catfish and drum in the basin. The haul seine, once popular, is little used today.

Boat types

In other sections of this report will be found discussions of Louisiana boat types. Perhaps this is a good place however to cover two now disappeared varieties that were often associated with life in the swamp.

The skiff was a small wooden rowboat, pointed sharply at the bow but with a blunter stern. Its flat bottom and shallow draft allowed it to travel the many bayous whose depth was often neglible. The Cajuns rowed this boat standing up, facing forward, using a device called a joug to place the oarlocks at the proper height.

The bateau was a species of flat boat, with square bow and stern. It shared with the skiff a flat bottom and shallow draft. The type developed following the introduction of the gasoline engine. The

engine was usually placed in the center of the boat. The noise of the initial one and two cylinder engines gave the bateau its other name, the putt-putt.

Outboard motors pushed aside the bateau in favor of an allied type, the chaland. Usually built of aluminum, it too is squared at bow and stern and has a true planing hull.

SECTION II

SEASONS

The Winter

Even in sub-tropical southern Louisiana, the creatures of the wild must prepare for winter. Some store food for the months when it is scarce. Others, like snakes, will seek out places to hibernate. For many animals, their coat of fur will come in thick and luxurious to warm them when the north wind blows.

You can see winter coming in the coats of cats, or dogs, or horses. But for the animals of the wild, especially the rats of the marshes, the thick winter coat that saves them from the cold is also their death sentence, for it is coveted by trappers, who each December through February plant their snares in wait.

Trapping

"I remember reading back in the late '30s that Terrebonne Parish alone produced more fur bearing animals than all of Canada and Alaska combined. Just this one Parish. Primarly muskrat, otters, mink, and then this nutria came in and replaced the muskrat."

- ROLAND J. CHAMPAGNE

History

Louisiana participated only peripherally in the great fur trade that fueled the exploration and colonization of the North American continent. Its port of New Orleans was conceived as an easier water

route than the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River for exporting pelts. Indeed transhipment remained Louisiana's major contribution to the fur industry until this century, with mink, otter and raccoon trapping of only minor importance carried on as an adjunct to the more profitable alligator hunting industry. Upriver St. Louis was the center of the fur trade until replaced by New York in the 1920s.

The trapping boom in Louisiana initially began as an effort to eradicate a pest. Exploding populations of muskrat were ruining the habitat of mink and otter, and even destroying extensive areas of cattle range. Muskrat "eat outs" were leaving marshes bare of groundcover, and therefore subject to erosion. When New York furriers embraced the Louisiana muskrat for their manufactures, not only was an industry born, but the boom was on.

By the mid-twenties, Louisiana had over a thousand buyers and dealers working with over twenty thousand licensed trappers to harvest pelts, primarily muskrat. Such big business could not be conducted without conflict, as disputes over trapping grounds escalated into sometimes armed struggles. The St. Bernard - Plaquemines Trappers' War of 1926, for example, was an early test of power for Leander Perez, soon to consolidate his rule as "Boss of the Delta."

The trapping boom, as well as the concurrent popularity of marshland reclamation, set off a mad scramble by private interests to acquire title to the vast marshlands along the coast. The wetlands that had been ceded to the state by the federal government were sold off for a song. Powerful levee districts were created to effect these transfers. Hundreds of thousands of acres went often with fewer

formalities than would be necessary to sell a house or vacant lot. The true extent of this rape of Louisiana's assets would not be known until the decades to come proved how many of these lands hid mineral deposits beneath them.

Nor was this great land grab limited to state lands. Blacks, Indians, illiterate Cajuns, indeed anyone without a voice among the local "courthouse gang", might find himself disenfranchised. For someone who made his living farming his frontlands or fishing on the sea, his unfenced, usually unsurveyed marshy backlands were easily subject to encroachment by a rapacious, organized neighbor. The tactic of allowing a trapper trapping rights on company lands in exchange for a quit-claim on what he considered his own lands was a technique still being used in the 1970s.

The Great Depression caused a very sudden downturn in the popularity of raccoon and muskrat coats, ending the trapping boom. The introduction of the nutria was the biggest subsequent change in the industry to date.

The nutria (Myocastor coypus) is a rat of twenty-five pounds with four huge curved orange teeth. A feisty creature native to the Peruvian Andes, it was imported to that salt-dome Shangri-La of Louisiana, Avery Island. Legend has it that they broke from their pens during a hurricane. There were also at least some intentional releases.

Nutria will move in on muskrat territory, eat all the succulent grasses, then survive on coarser grass that the muskrat can't stomach. Nevertheless their territorial expansion was encouraged, or at least

rooted for, across the Louisiana coast. Many trappers believed the nutria would cross with the muskrat and make for bigger muskrat.

Fishermen thought it would eat up the "water lillies" (water hyacinth). Another import, this aquatic plant from the far east was brought in a half century earlier. It so thoroughly clogged bayous that it killed fish, blocked drains, entangled boats, and hampered the operations of ferries and pontoon bridges.

The nutria wouldn't eat the water lillies and spurned courtship with the muskrat. Instead it was a pest. With worthless fur, it drove out the valuable muskrats. Its burrowing into levees angered cane farmers in the east and rice farmers in the west. For a time it's only value was its right front paw, the proof of kill needed to claim the bounty offered by agricultural interests.

Hurricane Audrey in '57 and the Big Freeze of '62 temporarily reduced nutria populations, but it was the development of methods to treat and use the animals fur that eventually brought its numbers under control.

Of Louisiana's current 4500 licensed trappers, perhaps half of them are full-time (though seasonal) commercial operators in the coastal marsh. The nutria has replaced the muskrat as the mainstay of the industry. Few trappers today take themselves and their families to live in camp or campboat for the duration of the winter.

"I remember the men would go trapping and I would stay around and I'd watch the furs you know cause some people sometimes their furs were stolen if they had no one around."

- MRS. PAUL ELLENDER

Operations and Artifacts

The essentials of the trapping operation have changed but little in the more than a half-century since the trapping boom. Steel leghold traps are set in the marsh, chained to stakes embedded in the muck. The trapper "passes" his traps every day or two, killing the animals with a quick blow from a club. Animals are skinned. The skins are scraped to remove any attached flesh, then stretched on "molds" to dry in the sun.

The characteristic mold is a flat wooden form 18 to 30 inches long and tapered at one end. Sizes vary within a trapper's collection; he must pick the mold whose size fits the animal he has skinned.

There is a tale told of a man who used hunting dogs to gather pelts (a quite illegal practice) rather than setting traps. Each morning he would come into the back yard, hold up a mold for his dogs to see, and off the hounds would go, baying and searching for a nutria to fit the mold. One day, after a night of carousing, he slept late. He was still in bed when his wife went out on the back porch to do some ironing. The impatient dogs took one look at what she held and set off for the woods. No doubt they are still there, still looking for a gargantuan nutria to fit the "mold" that was really an ironing board.

For muskrat, whose size when mature varies less than some other furbearers, standardized molds of heavy guage steel wire are common. They look a bit like croquet hoops, with a twisted loop at the top for hanging.

The motorized pirogue, the mudboat, or when trapping grounds are accessible to levees, the three-wheeler, have become today's trappers' methods of transportation. The average nutria trapper today sets 200 - 400 traps on a lease of several thousand acres.

In the old days leases were only 100-300 acres but "marshwalking" was one word. It defined that specialized skill of putting one's feet down only on the center of the largest clumps of grass, and never in the muck between them. How adept one was was tested by a running broad jump, with arms full of rats and traps, over a "tranasse" (ditch or small bayou).

Well into this century still dug by short handled shovel, tranasses were two feet wide and inches deep, but running for miles through the marsh. It was a canal fit only for that originally dug-out, shallower draught cousin of the canoe, the "pirogue".

Well, maybe not only for the pirogue. There is many a story of trapper's pirogue and comparably sized alligator meeting head to head in a tranasse. Like Robin Hood and Friar Tuck on the log, it became a question of who would step down.

One tradition retained from the methods of former times is the burning of the marsh. Sections of marsh grass are burned off with the smoke being seen for miles, and sometimes creating a rural smog on cold winter mornings. The burning makes travel easy and promotes the growth of fresh, succulent three corner grass for the rats.

Alligators

Closely related to trapping is the hunting of alligator for their hides. Long an occupation in Louisiana, it was banned in the early sixties when populations of the reptile dipped dangerously low. By the early seventies the alligator was coming back, but its listing as an endangered species put off the opening of a state wide season until 1981, when nearly fifteen thousand hides were sold with an average value of $120.

A full grown male alligator will reach eighteen feet in length, a female perhaps half that. They will eat virtually anything that is small enough for them to swallow. Unlike many other reptiles, mothers care for their young after they hatch from the clutch of eggs.

Waterfowl hunting

At the southern end of the great Mississippi Flyway of migratory waterfowl, the marshes of coastal Louisiana have long been known for game birds. With the founding of New Orleans, its French market became a bazar where first Indians and later Europeans and their descendants sold the waterfowl harvested from the surrounding marshes.

By the turn of this century the take of 'market hunters' was measured in box-carloads each winter. The New Orleans French market, as well as rail head towns like Houma, Morgan City, and Abbeville became but way stations for dressed birds that were shipped to restaurants around the country.

Of ducks, the market was in mallards and pintails exclusively, priced by the pair. Weaponry ranged from extra heavy gauge guns that were nearly cannon to the 'jambe de chien', the single shot, crack barrel 12 or 20gauge shotgun.

Though considered by many today to be unsportsmanlike, in the old days ducks were shot as they sat on the water, never on the fly. This was the 'pot shot', an expression that has lingered longer than the professional hunting from which it came. Its current meaning of an easy target is appropriate because it allowed many birds to be killed from a single shell and indeed helped insure there was a kill at all. Its origin comes from what was then just as important a reason. These birds were hunted for eating, 'for the pot.' To shoot them on the water meant that the lead pellets entered the head and back, leaving the choice meat of the breast undisturbed.

Birds for market were plucked on the belly only, then gutted. The remaining feathers helped to preserve the meat. The ducks were cleaned well; bloody birds were rejected by the buyers. Market hunters would pack their birds into barrels with ice. Paddlewheelers traveling the bayous would buy from the hunters and drop off fresh supplies of ice to be buried in pits until needed. (DIXIE MAGAZINE, 2/16/86)

The extermination of the passenger pigeon by market hunters early in this century caused a public outcry. If nothing had been done ducks and geese might have have been next.

The federal Migratory Waterfowl Act and Migratory Bird Treaty of 1918 introduced closed seasons and bag limits, and outlawed if not stopped professional hunting.

"Conservation was a new thing then and it, we were one of the early states, as I understand, Louisiana was one of the first states to have a department of conservation. And so it was a new idea, people didn't understand about it. It was very difficult. People had been shooting ducks and game whenever they chose to do so and did everything else when they chose to do so. So it was difficult to pass a law and try to get all the people down these bayous, who lived on the bayous, to understand that they had to observe seasons and it was very...and then when they had done this all their lives. Whenever they felt like eating ducks they went out and got 'em. It took time to learn all these things, about seasons for fishing and other things."

-DOROTHY MATHERNE

Naturally there was considerable resistance among the hunters to such a sweeping change in livlihood and lifestyle. The legends of lawmen like Wyatt Earp and Elliot Ness have nothing on the tales still told about the early game wardens of the Louisiana marshes.

One of the best remembered was Johnny Faulk of Terrebonne Parish. Though completely exonerated, his having killed a fugitive at an isolated oyster camp did little to diminish his reputation as someone to be reckoned with. For every false bottomed boat or back way home, Johnny Faulk was said to have a countermeasure. He is remembered as a worthy opponent and an honorable man, even by some whom he sent to prison.

The tradition of professional hunting would linger on for at least another half-century past its theoretical end. A Vermilion Parish

woman dates by more momentous events a raid that netted a flock of residents of the town of Gueydan for selling migratory waterfowl to an undercover agent.

"The game wardens they were knocking on the front door." My husband he was going out the back door. But I was watching the TV because the man, he was walking on the moon.

-CLAILIE DE PERRODILE

With their profession now illegal and game wardens ever more vigilant, many professional hunters became guides working in the new industry that catered to sport hunters. The thousands of canals being dredged that eventually would severely reduce waterfowl habitat, in the short run greatly improved access for hunters.

Urban professionals, often organized into clubs, would acquire leases on prime hunting ponds. Weekends at hunting camps took on a social significance that would have been quite foreign to the market hunters of old. It is rare the successful Louisiana politician who has never solicited votes and donations from a group of men eating duck gumbo while he himself was dressed for his speech in a suit of camoflage.

The game wardens were to have no rest with the sport hunters either, as poaching became nearly a rite of manhood. During the Vietnam War, and again during the Iranian Hostage crisis, it was said that a quick end to the conflict would be to drop a group of Cajuns into enemy territory, tell them the enemy was good to eat, but there was a bag limit of six and the season was closed. It was assumed that such an irresistable combination of inducements would result in drastic attrition in the enemy's numbers.

The late State Senator A. O. Rappelet, who during his political life was publicly accused of more crimes than many a law book contains, was convicted only once-- of possessing ducks in excess of the limit. Perhaps the most fanciful examples of Louisiana folktales have been the stories concocted to explain to unamused gamewardens the presence of milo, corn, or other grains (illegally used as bait) in favorite hunting ponds.

The paraphenalia of duck hunting has not changed as much as who hunts and why. The traditional 'ambuscade', or duck blind, is still usually made of roseau cane, though likely today to have a frame or pirogue cradle of 2x4" wooden studs.

Duck calls are still available that are made by hand by local craftsmen. Designs reflect not only the species to be imitated but also the acoustics of the pond to be hunted.

The wooden 'bidon', or covered ammunition bucket that doubles as the hunter's seat, is harder and harder to find in sporting goods stores. Largely it has been replaced by the plastic cooler, often painted an appropriate camoflage pattern.

The traditional dugout cypress pirogue has all but disappeared. With the clearcutting of the cypress forests, there remained few trees large enough from which to make one. Substitutes, often of plywood or fiberglass, usually had the additional advantage of being lighter in weight and less likely to split as they dried out.

The two methods of propelling the common pirogue (as opposed to the motorized pirogue a machine) are the paddle and the 'fourche', or pushpole. Both are readily available today in forms locally carved by

craftsmen or mass produced. One can only wonder however how long the usually more expensive hand made item will stand up in the marketplace to the stronger laminated paddle and the technologically superior butterfly-hinged pushpole.

If measured by irony, the greatest changes have occurred to the decoys, the wooden models of birds used to lure the real ones down to their doom. In the old days decoys were carved by hand, with hatchet, knife,and drawknife, from the soft roots of the cypress and tupelo gum trees.

Market hunters would replenish their supplies in the off season, replacing decoys that had been lost or broken, carving sets for children who were joining the ranks of the hunters. Some men, or often families, became well known in their local areas for their decoys. The Viziers of Galliano on Bayou Lafourche was one such dynasty of carvers that spanned several generations.

Even in the most experienced hands, however, these decoys were only rudimentarily carved and hastily painted. While to look at them one cannot deny that each carver had his own style and some a high level of artistry, it remains that these birds were utilitarian objects whose makers had no higher aspirations for them.

The wooden decoy was replaced, like the bidon and the pirogue, with mass produced items. Plastic and even styrofoam proved to be much lighter to carry, less likely to break in the sack, cheaper to buy, or all three.

As remaining stocks of wooden decoys disappeared through attrition or neglect, they came to be valued as collectors' items. Soon they were fetching prices that doubtlessly had many an old time carver turning over in his grave. New carvers sprang up. Old carvers went back to work.

Since the use for these birds was decorative rather than functional, the premium was soon put on quality rather than the old style impetus for quantity. Great pains were taken to exactly replicate anatomy and coloring.

In the old days every hunter kept a few wild ducks to mix in with his decoys. These flocks had disappeared when the use of such live decoys had been made illegal. Now carvers were starting up flocks again, but this time for use as live models.

Technology, too, allowed for change. The electric band saw is a huge improvement on the hatchet for the rough shaping stage. The wood burning pencil allowed patient artists to outline each feather, and for some, to burn in the texture of each individual feather.

In the hands of an artist such as three time world champion carver 'Tit Tan Brunet of Galliano, the wooden bird can be mistaken for a real, living one, even close up. Such decoys sometimes sell for five-figure prices, more than many old-timers made in a lifetime of carving.

THE SPRING

Floods

What hurricanes are to the Louisiana coast, high water, 'l'eau haute', is to the bayou banks and interior wetlands. Spring flooding carried down the Mississippi River from a third of America pushes through the River's delta and its distributary bayous, probing for weak spots in the natural levees and the grander levees man has built upon them.

In plantation country, where huge fortunes could be at stake, armed guards patrolled the levees in the springtime. To intentionally break the levee across the bayou meant your neighbor's fields would be ruined; but then again the relief in water pressure could very well save your own.

"The plantation families were responsible for building a dam down Bayou Black. "In the high water of 1927 the people down Bayou Black were being flooded down toward Morgan City so they became resentful so they attacked the dam. I don't know exactly how they did it, but they used dynamite and blew up the dam."

- SIDNEY PUGH INGRAM

If 'water rights' were often a source of conflict in the American West, 'water burden' might be a better term for instigation of numerous incidents in south Louisiana. In 1927, for instance, violence was only narrowly averted when a privately built dam on Bayou Black in Terrebonne Parish was dynamited. Whole communities feuded over which town had more right to save itself.

Flood Forklore

Heavy rains and an early snowmelt combined in 1927 to create the worst flood in living memory. Six million acres were under water in Louisiana. Breaks occurred in levee after levee. Nearly 300 people drowned, as well as 50,000 cattle and 25,000 mules and horses. Refugee camps were set up at several sites. Lafayette alone was estimated to house 34,000 refugees. Tent cities went up. Public health officials began mass innoculations for flood-borne diseases. Evacuations began in early April. Some people could not return to their homes until the end of August.

For a generation after 1927 births, deaths, and other events would be dated by being before or after the high water. It is impossible that an event so cataclysmic in so many lives would not enter into folklore.

A Moreauville man is playing cards. Having not won a trick this hand, he fears a 'boure' that would cost him his day's winnings. When he unexpectedly saves himself he exclaims, "Safe at Port Allen!" It was the text of a telegram more than a half-century earlier that told him his wife-to-be was stranded on the other side of the swamp, but not drowned as he had feared.

One of Cajun humorist Marion Marcotte's most popular recorded tales is 'L'Eau Haute De '27', the high water of '27. In it he outlines in hilarious deadpan the inconveniences of life when the one's whole world is underwater, and pokes gentle fun at the relief efforts.

Flood Protection

Floods spur flood protection. After the high water of March 1903 that inundated thousands of acres of sugarcane lands on Bayou Lafourche, the bayou itself was severed from the Mississippi River at Donaldsonville.

That rather radical step certainly did elliminate crevasses along the bayou, but it also cut off a water route that had been used since long before the white man came and was still being used by packet paddlewheelers.

The bayou went stagnant for its 120 mile length. Less water flowing in distributory bayous like Terrebonne, Grand, and Petit Caillou reduced the productivity of their estuaries for producing seafood. By allowing the tide to penetrate a higher reach and denying replenishing silt, the damming of the Lafourche's source hastened the erosion of the delta at its mouth.

Pumps were later installed to provide some fresh water flow through the bayou.

The 1927 catastrophe, inundating as it did much of the lower Mississippi Valley, made flood protection a national priority. President Coolidge toured Louisiana during the high water. A huge multi-billion dollar system of relief channels was begun that would eventually encompass the Bonnet Carre, Morganza, and Atchafalaya Spillways.

Though people of the region suffer far more from hurricanes than riverine flooding today, one must not assume that the flooding problem has been completely solved. The Delta Farms crevasse of 1973 flooded a large reclamation area east of Larose when the Intracoastal

Canal levee broke. With stock and crop losses enormous, the reclamation area was never redrained. Now a big square lake, it is a popular Lafourche Parish shrimping ground, productive but noted for its underwater snags: tractors, fenceposts, and the like that will shred a net in seconds.

Of course, the greatest potential cause of floods and economic change is the Mississippi River's fervent wish to make one of it's semi-milennial course change. The Corps of Engineer's constant work at the Old River Control Structure at Morganza notwithstanding, the River might one day succeeed in making the change to the Atchafalaya River path.

Morgan City would likely wash away, but its former site would become the most valuable undeveloped port location in the world. Baton Rouge and New Orleans, on the banks of a slowly shrinking bayou would in geological time erode away.

Sidney Pugh Ingram Volume 162, Minute 15.5

Cypress Lumbering

The trees of the cypress swamps could be cut in any season. Whether by the animal strength of oxen teams or the engineering marvels of elevated railroads through waterbound forests, the logs would be hauled out. But it was during the high water of spring that the swamp became one big open highway for the loggers, their log rafts, and pull boats. Systematically, tree by tree, they cleared the forests. In just over thirty years, the face of Louisiana had changed forever, Cajun life would never be the same, and hardly a full-grown cypress tree was left standing.

"How would you fix the logs for a pullboat? Well you cut it down and cut it the full length. On the top end if it wasn't too big they'd put one hole in it. They had a choker with a 7/8 chain you know. They had a plug 12 inches long on one end and a ring on the other end with a brass bar that slipped through that ring and come back and acted across you see. When a boat made a trip, come to the back, it send them chains out and the men take 'em and put 'em in the logs. Then they catch 'em with a side line, bring 'em to the road, hook 'em up, send 'em to the front and come on back. When I was running that boat up there I pulled the most logs that that boat had ever pulled for Norman Breaux. 270 in one day in 10 hours. 14 or 15 to the trip, man, you couldn't see anything but logs coming down. Well some were 75-80 feet long - those cypress you know."

- ROBERT HEBERT

Europeans learned the value of the cypress from the Indians who burned out the centers of logs then removed the char with shell scrapers in order to dig out their pirogues. If the Cajun culture needs an emblem,the cypress would do well, for the tree permeated the entire existence of Cajuns well into this century.

Cypress is slow to rot, making it excellent wood for boats, be they dug out pirogues or Louisiana luggers or Biloxi trawlers. That same property, as well as its repellant quality to termites, made it ideal for fence posts and house blocks, any situation where wood must touch the ground.

The pieux fence, of square slotted posts into which cross rails were inserted, was first used to keep cattle out, and later to keep them in. One tale tells of a Yankee immigrint who disdained the cypress pieux for cheaper willow stakes. He was a laughingstock for years as a forest, miles long but one tree thick, grew along the fence lines where his willow stakes had taken root.

Cypress splits fairly easily. In some cases this was a problem. The owner of a pirogue, for instance, had to always keep roseau cane handy to lay in the bottom of his pirogue to keep away the sun that might crack it. But for some purposes, the splitting was a very valuable trait. Shingles and shakes, hand split from cypress blocks, roofed houses in south Louisiana well into this century. Of split cypress also were the stays that held out the brim of the "garde soleil", the characteristic Cajun sun bonnet.

The Acadian cottage was built top to bottom of cypress. The shingles and blocks were mentioned above, but the boards, beams and rafters were of cypress too. Gutters were built of cypress 6"x6"s, hollowed out in the method of a dug out pirogue. Windows were covered with cypress batten shutters. In the old days, the whole house was even held together, not with iron nails, but with cypress pegs.

The staves of the cistern that collected rain water for drinking were cypress. So were the handles of the tools that tilled the fields. The home-made bird and rabbit traps that turned field pests into table delicacies were usually put together from scrap chunks of cypress.

The process of clear cutting and sawing up the huge forests left a great deal of scrap pieces. Though horrifying in view of today's scarcity, tons of scrap cypress was burned up as firewood.

After the forest had been clear cut, individual operators would pass to recover the sometimes mishapen tree here and there, to float it home and laboriously shape it into a railroad tie.

The root of the cypress, well known for its portruding "knees", is of a different quality from the rest of the tree. Commercial logging operations made their cut well above the balooning out that marks this section of the tree. Soft, light, and easily carved, cypress root is the whittler's friend. Generations of Cajun children grew up with toys carved of cypress root. Generations of duck hunters hunted over decoys carved of cypress root.

A relative of his says that the ancestors of the late U.S. Senator Allen Ellender established their fortune with a plantation bought on credit, then paid for with cypress logs they chopped by hand in their backlands.

Trees to be cut were deadened by denuding a ring of bark. After a year the tree would be easier to cut, more boyuant to float out. Axes were rarely if ever used. The universal tool was the two man saw known as a "passe-partout" ("pass through anything"). The sawyers stood above the water on steel wedges driven into the softer base of the tree.

Commercial operations had a range of tools and machinery to harvest trees as quickly and efficiently as possible. Hooks and eyes and skitters and chains linked the logs to the pullboat. In the mill

pond, logs were jockeyed around by men who walked them as they floated. Their tool was a long pole, to balance themselves, push logs, and joust with the occasional alligator.

There were many small scale portable sawmills, that could service the needs of a community. Often they were operated on a share, sometimes by the local storekeeper. The invention of motors to power them obviously helped a great deal. But the dent these portables made in the forests is neglible compared to the mammoth mills that grew up alongside them around the turn of the century.

"All the logs were floated in, they would pull 'em in and they had a little canal dug right up to the mill and hoist 'em up with a conveyor right on into the mill and the lumber was cut and stacked out in the yard and it had to stay out and cure for awhile, to dry and then they would load it as they got orders for it. They would load it on freight cars and ship it."

- STANLEY P. WALTHER

"The Donner mill where I work....cut from 1900 to 1932. The Donner mill use to cut 100 thousand feet of lumber a day."

- LEON ABOUT

"The hurricane in '26 was real bad, but I worked all day behind the saw mill at Donner the day of that hurricane. Every now and then we'd see a part of the sawmill roof pass over our head going into the swamp."

- ROBERT HEBERT

The Mills

The big lumber mills contributed much to towns like Houma, Patterson, and Morgan City. Some of the biggest mills were towns all by themselves. Donner, in western Terrebonne Parish, was one such place. At its peak it rivaled the parish seat of Houma in size, but not in cosmopolitanism. It didn't even have a town government, at least not along democratic lines, for the company owned every inch of ground, dictated who might work there, and even who might live there. The company owned the store and the saloon. Workers were paid in tokens, redeeemable at the company store.

The disparate groups that worked at the mill were divided into quarters within the company town. In Donner the Italians had a quarter. So did the Cajuns who had moved in from surrounding countryside. A half century after the Civil War, the black section was still dubbed "Free Town".

Another cypress mill town was Bowie, just east of Raceland in Lafourche Parish. It rose from the swamps in 1896 and died in flames in 1917. Such lumber towns needed to be near rail lines and the backwater swamps. Often a high piece of land along a bayou was too costly or inconvenient. Railroad elevations served as levees, then campgrounds of refuge when the levees failed. When the Hymelia Crevasse broke the Mississippi river levee at Lucy in 1912, in Bowie (thirty miles away) they pitched tents along the tracks.

Much of Bowie burned down during World War I. It was the fate of many such places. The huge piles of logs, sawdust, drying lumber, and slapped-up company houses were all friends of fire. When the trees had been clearcut to an unprofitable distance from the mill, it no longer made sense to rebuild.

The town would wither away, the houses themselves sold off as lumber. In the end only scars along the rail line, abandoned canals, and forests of stumps would remain to tell the tale. The swamps still bear the scars. From the air one can still see the radial lines of the pull boat runs, even where a new growth of willow has sprung up.

"When these sawmills cut the cypress here, all they were interested in is that lumber, is that tree. After they cut that tree, they sold the land and they left. They weren't interested in reforesting the land. If they'd been, 50, 60 years ago if they'd planted a tree for every one they cut we'd still have cypress."

- RALPH BISLAND

"They did cut a lot of lumber and the damaging thing was that they were using our red cypress. And some of these trees, people don't realize this, I climbed in a tree and we measured it and I wasn't at the top and I was 150 feet in the air...that's the end of Columbus Street right here in Houma. The stumps out there are as big as this room. That we don't know. When these trees were cut they even cut trees they couldn't put through the mill. These red cypress were probably 2000 years old, and you'll never see that again."

- SIDNEY SPAHR

"It looked like the bottom line, the profit line was the only thing they were thinking about...when they raped the Parish of Terrebonne as far as the lumber business was concerned."

- MERLIN BASCLE

Moss Gathering

Hanging from the cypress and other trees was another resouce, moss (Spanish Moss, not a true moss, "la barbe espagnole" ou "la mousse espagnole"). Measured by number of individual practitioners, it was probably the bayou country's most common seasonal occupation.

It was a crop that required no planting and could be harvested year round, though certainly some of the choicest areas were only available during high water. Moss picking was the filler for the gaps between other, more profitable seasonal jobs.

A cottage industry of back yard curing grew up. "Beds" perhaps six inches deep were dug and filled with water. The moss was submerged but turned every day to prevent rotting. After a while the outer covering was washed away , the black, bristly inner cortex would remain.

In time, moss gins would send their boats up the bayous to buy moss for further processing and sale to manufacturers. Moss was stuffed into upholstery, bedding, horse collars, rope, etc. Many of Henry Ford's Model T's had their seats stuffed with Louisiana moss.

Moss certainly went into the mattresses made at home. It was said you could judge the status of a Cajun by his bed. The poor slept on bare corn shucks, the middle class had a homemade moss mattress over that, and the rich added another of duck feathers.

Each spring when the house was aired the moss mattresses would be opened and emptied. The moss itself would be washed, hung on a line to dry, then fluffed and stuffed back into the mattress. Many a tale is told of how the last frantic efforts of a chicken disturbed someone's

night's sleep but saved it from suffocation in the moss that had earlier seemed such a good place to roost.

Moss was also used in "bousillage", the mixture of moss and mud that was the Cajun's plaster and insulating material. Even the dome of the typical southeast Louisiana outdoor oven is bousillage formed over a half-barrel, then fired by burning the barrel out. (A brick base on a cypress platform, with a palmetto roof completes the oven.) Chimneys were chinked with moss, and built outdoors, against the house but framed to be pushed over when they eventually caught fire.

Green uncured moss was used as toilet tissue, seed cover, sometimes impromptu wadding to load a firearm.

Only one moss gin still operates, in Napoleonville. The industry was killed by cheaper, more convenient foam rubber. Today the moss is disappearing, not from overpicking, but from air pollution. The amount that survives could hardly support an industry. Fewer and fewer people remember the skills to make a moss mattress.

Crawfish

History

In the 1930s free crawfish (presumably well salted) were used in Louisiana saloons as an inducement to buy beer. Long considered a food of the poor, it was rarely considered a dish of choice, or at least admitted to be such, until recently. Because when plentiful they are so easily caught, crawfish provided a method for younger children to begin assuming their roles providing for the family table.

Crawfish as an industry began in the 1940s. The huge levee projects that followed the high water of '27 tended to create areas (within the spillway system) where crawfish were available in truly commercial quantities, at the same time making other areas drier and therefore a less favorable habitat. Thus an imbalance was created which opened opportunities for commercial exploitation.

At the same time, growing migration from the Louisiana countryside to its cities meant that more and more people were cut off from handy crawfishing grounds. Presumably the nostalgia for the countryside that urban living often entailed embraced as well the lowly crawfish. Thus, when no longer available, a food source that had often been disdained when free became something one might be willing to pay for.

Ozema Allemond of Henderson is credited with being the first commercial crawfisherman, but his example was soon followed. (Esman) Homer Melancon and Shelton Peltier, two nearby fish dealers, had by the end of the '40s added a line of crawfish, available live or boiled. Both of them later followed the lead of Fernand Broussard in the early '50s in processing the crawfish for sale peeled.

Operations

Two species, the nearly black Red Swamp Crawfish and the brown White River Crawfish, share the market between them. Though no doubt important to the crawfish themselves, the two species are neither segregated nor treated differently in marketing or consumption.

On a commercial scale, crawfish are caught in traps, baited with fish or commercially prepared bait, and checked from daily to every few days. The most common trap is a wire mesh cylinder design. The fifty pound red mesh onion sack (holding about forty pounds of crawfish) is the standard for sale or shipment.

For home consumption, the lift net, a square of cotton mesh stretched between the points of two wire hoops, is usually used. Such a net requires frequent attention since the crawfish is held only by its interest in the bait, a chicken neck or beef melt, tied to the center of the net.

For home use, serious crawfish boiling is done outdoors, over a butane-fed buner. Large aluminum or steel pots will often have a wire cage within for safe, efficient removal of the crawfish. Boiled for ten minutes or so in a half gallon of water to every pound of crawfish, normally crawfish share their bubbling caldron with whole onions, potatoes or ears of corn.

Pond Crawfish

A $10,000 state grant in 1960 is credited with providing much of the knowledge that allowed development of the pond crawfish industry. The growing of crawfish in ponds has extended the season, increased the production, and made the crop more reliable.

True crawfish ponds are leveed areas of generally low-lying land ranging from hundreds to thousands of acres. Besides the levees, pump systems and a reliable source of fresh water are required to provide the oxegenation that the crawfish require. Ponds are flooded in the

fall and drained in summer. The summer drainage promotes plant growth and kills the fish that are the crawfish's main predators (except, of course, for man.) Some crawfishermen even stock their ponds with alligators to eat the perch that eat the crawfish.

Rice fields usually have all the requisites of a crawfish pond. Today many rice farmers of the Louisiana prairies use crawfish as a second, winter crop. In addition to the income provided, crawfish excrement is viewed as a source of fertilization.

Processing

By 1982 Louisiana had forty crawfish processing plants, with a third of the industry based in Henderson. Crawfishermen, like the shrimpers of the coast, generally always sell to the same processor. Conversely, the processor, with rare exceptions, is expected to buy the entire catch delivered by 'his' fishermen. While disagreements do erupt, and in the 1980s strikes have occurred, the system generally works to the satisfaction of all.

After boiling, crawfish to be sold as meat must be peeled. No mechanichal device exists to accomplish this. Thus 'peelers', contract laborers who do that rather monotonous work, are required. Often working in family groups, peelers are usually women. They have not the loyalty to certain plants that fishermen do, instead following the best pay and steady supply from plant to plant.

Crawfish plants will often peel (or, more accurately, pick) and process crabs when crawfish supplies are low. Crabs are brought in from the coast. Recently a plant has opened to process the crawfish

shells, formerly a waste product, into a natural red dye for sale in Japan.

Shrimping

With August comes the season of the white shrimp (Penaeus setiferus). Often called jumbo shrimp when mature, whites can reach a size of ten or fewer to the pound. White shrimp, along with their lesser cousins the brown or Brazil shrimp and the tiny sea bob (the name comes from the French 'six barbes', literally, six whiskers), have made Louisiana the number one state in shrimp production.

While shrimp was one of the many sea foods that Native Americans and their European followers harvested from Louisiana's estuaries, a serious commercial shrimp fishery did not begin until the arrival of immigrants from Asia.

Lee Yuen arrived in Louisiana from China just before the Civil War. Instrumental in developing Louisiana's early rice industry, he was also perhaps the key figure in the birth of the state's shrimp industry.

Shrimp are very perishable. Until the problems of preservation had been tackled, there was little incentive for increasing the efficiency of catching techniques.

Within a couple of years of the Civil War's close, there were in operation plants that used the two methods -- sun-drying and canning -- that would provide the only significant markets for Louisiana's shrimp until refrigeration took hold after World War II.

Shrimp Drying

To sun-dry shrimp, one must first boil them in brine. Two or three days in Louisiana's warm summer sun are then sufficient to dry them. The heads and hulls are then removed. Once dry, if kept dry, they will remain edible indefinitely.

Yee Foo of Jefferson Parish received a U.S. patent in 1885 for the shrimp drying process. There is little evidence that he was able to enforce his patent, but that hardly seems inequitable since the process was established in Louisiana well in advance of the patent, and had been practiced in Mr. Foo's native China for a milennium.

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As a commercial operation, shrimp were dried on "platforms". These structures, built of cypress, had a large central drying area where the shrimp could be spread thinly, occasionally raked back and forth to promote even drying, and swept into piles and covered each evening or on the approach of rain. This expansive deck, raised eight or ten feet above the surrounding marsh or even open water, was sometimes as large as a football field.

Around the perimeter of the platform were the 'camps' that housed the platform workers and fishermen, the warehouses, and usually a general store. The largest platforms, such as Manilla Village, established in 1884 in the Barataria estuary, even had their own post office.

To remove the heads and hulls, a mechanical beater was patented in the early 1920s, then superseded by a rotary beater in the early 30s.

Prior to those developments, hulls were removed by pounding the shrimp in burlap sacks, or by what was probably the most picturesque of the industry's rituals, the 'Shrimp Dance'.

"They use to dance the shrimp on those platforms thats something thats in the history of the shrimp business. People use to pile up the shrimp on the platform and when they were shells were brittle enough they use to put moccasins on and dance around in the shrimp, they'd follow each other around and make a circle around and stomp the heads and shell. They'd take 'em and throw 'em up in the wind and let the wind blow the shells away."

- LOUIS BLUM

Dancing the shrimp was the process of knocking loose the heads and hulls by walking on them. Special shoes were reserved for that purpose. Often, but not exclusively, the work of women and children, the shrimp would be spread on the platform in the shape of a ring only a few feet wide but with a diameter sufficiently large to keep the dancers from getting dizzy as they shuffled round and round.

Often one woman stood aside with a broom; her sweeping maintained the shape of the ring. A rhythym was kept up to ward off tedium. Occasionally actual musical accompaniment was provided. The dried and pounded shrimp were then sifted by hand on racks of wood and wire, and packed into barrels for export.

Much of the shrimp drying industry disappeared when markets in China were invaded by the Japanese on the eve of World War II. After the war, widely available refrigeration took less labor and yielded a

better product with more potential domestically. Platforms were blown down by hurricanes; after the clear cutting of the cypress forests, it was too expensive to rebuild them.

Today a few operators, such as Blum and Bergeron in Houma, still trade in large lots of dried shrimp. But for most folks, dried shrimp is a snack, to be bought in a cellophane pack and eaten like beer nuts in a bar.

Shrimp Canning, Freezing, and Refrigeration

Shrimp canning in Louisiana began in 1867 but took nearly a decade to become commercially profitable. By the 1880s the production of canned shrimp in Louisiana was increasing by an average of a million pounds a year.

The early plants were built on barges that could be towed to the fishing grounds for the duration of the season, then brought back in safer harbor further inland for the rest of the year.

Later, as canneries evolved into larger, more permanent structures, they were often adapted to canning beans, pumpkins, or other vegetables in the off season.

"The whistle would blow anytime from 1:00 until 2 or 3:00 o'clock in the morning and the whole town would hear the whistle and that was time for the 'swimp' pickers to get themselves up there. But everyone in town could hear that whistle."

- MARGARET SCHAFFER

Nets

The first nets used for shrimping were cast nets, a round net four to ten feet across, weighted along the edges, that is designed to be thrown. When the net is cast a cord from the center of the net remains connected to the arm of the thrower. The net covers a circle of water and quickly sinks. The design is such that when the fisherman begins to pull in the net, the cord he pulls first draws together the perimeter weights, effectively forming a closed sack.

The cast net is also efficient for catching smaller shallow water fin fish such as mullet. Long used for catching shrimp for home consumption, still widely used for catching bait shrimp today, it was replaced as the commercial net of choice in 1872 by the introduction of the haul seine.

"They use to have these tremendous seines that would stretch way out in the lake even several miles and people would get in the water and circle around with those seines and on the beach and pull 'em in and they use to catch a lot of stuff in those seines, fish and shrimp. I'm talking about big fish and with the shrimp and big shrimp too they catch in there. Sometimes they'd catch some shark. They didn't want the shark in there, eat the net up you know. Chew 'em up. They'd catch crabs and it would take, it took quite a while to spread one of them seines and pull those seines in. Many hours but they had a big gang of men that use to do that."

- LOUIS BLUM

The haul seine is a net five to ten feet wide and up to hundreds of feet long. Weighted along one longedge with floats along the other, it forms a wall of net from surface to bottom through the water.

In practice, a seining "company", a large group of men and boys, would wade into the surf along the beach to literally surround a school of shrimp located earlier by testing with a cast net. When the circle was closed and one end of the net met the other, the crew of the seining company would slowly move closer together, tightening the circle. By the time the circle was very small, the company's boat was brought up and the shrimp were scooped out of the seine with a dip net. Requiring as it did that one remain in chest deep water holding a net for hours at a time, a position in a seining company was no job for a wimp. As an interesting side note, the late David C. Pitre, a fisherman from Chênièr Caminada, remembered that in seining companies the normal procedure of allowing elders to serve themselves supper first was usually reversed.

Everyone ate from a large, bubbling, communal pot. The choicest tidbits invariably sank to the bottom. A short-handled ladle insured that the last served was the best fed.

The adoption of Ford, and later Palmer and Regal engines in the teens paved the way for the next great leap in net technology. With a motor, nets could be pulled. It is no accident that the otter trawl was introduced to Louisiana in 1919 and by 1920 the state's shrimp harvest had already doubled.

The otter trawl is a net shaped like a funnel, with a wide mouth and a narrow tail. Pulled behind a boat, trawl 'doors' or 'boards' of wood and steel attached to the left and right of the net's mouth serve by their weight to keep the trawl along the bottom and by their resistance to the water flow to keep the mouth opened to its widest limit.

There is a bulge in the net called the bag just above the tail. Usually of finer mesh, the bag is where the catch accumulates as the trawl is pulled along. The tail is tied off before the trawl is lowered into the water and untied to empty the net once it is brought back aboard.

A trawl is measured by the width of its mouth, with fifty or sixty feet usually the largest. The sixteen foot trawl, the largest allowed without a license, has virtually become the smallest available as well.

Small shrimp boats will usually pull a single net, while the large Florida-type trawlers pulls three or five. Two or two pair of main nets are suspended from booms on either side of the boat. (The typical silhouette of a shrimp boat are those booms in their upright position.) The third net, the try net, is usually a sixteen footer that is raised and checked on a continuing basis. Finding a try net full means the boat has just passed over a school of shrimp and ought to turn around to work it.

Numerous improvements have been made upon the trawl over the years. The tickle chain, dragging the ocean floor just before the net, causes shrimp that have buried themselves to jump up to their doom.

Variations on the basic design include the baloon trawl for deep water and the flat trawl, more energy efficient in shallow water.

Synthetic materials that need not be tarred are sometimes used instead of natural fiber webbing. The introduction of plastics eliminated the use of expensive natural cork for floats. Plastic rollers on the bottom of the trawl mouth and skids on trawl doors both evolved to reduce bottom friction.

To protect man against fish, the false tail, an outer sheath of flexible wide mesh, was developed to prevent porpoises from tearing nets as they tried to eat the shrimper's catch. To strike a blow in the opposite direction, the TED, or sea turtle excluder device, was made a mandatory addition to trawls used in federal waters in 1988.

Other developments never caught fire. The name of the chopstick trawl, introduced by Vietnamese immigrants, referred to the positioning of the booms rather than the diet of its designer. The electric trawl, which uses a mild electrical shock to rouse buried shrimp, was tested extensively but eventually banned.

The latest addition to the shrimpers arsenal is the 'paupiere', or butterfly net. With its mouth held open by a rectangular frame of steel tubing, the paupiere, almost always used in pairs, may be pulled along or used in a fixed position where natural current flow cause shrimp to enter the net. Unlike the trawl, when pulled it does not drag bottom.

Its great advantage in the fixed position is that it can work untended and while burning no fuel. Little wonder that it had a great surge in popularity during the 1973 Arab oil embargo. With falling energy prices in the mid 1980s, it once again began to lose out to the trawl in even small scale shrimping where it had been competitive. Its greater energy efficiency is coupled with much less fishing efficiency.

Boat Types

The Louisiana lugger was originally a sailing vessel with a flat bottom and 25 to forty feet in length. Known in the local French as a canot, the design seems to have come from northern France in the earliest days of the Louisiana colony. The English name comes from the lug sail rigging, but the name remained even after the mast had been cut down, the sails left to rot, and a Model T motor installed in most of the lugger working the south Louisiana fishing grounds. (Louisiana Folklife Festival program, October 1986).

The Biloxi Trawler, a design borrowed from neighboring Mississippi, has ribs of sawed cypress and a stern cabin, but it was the seaworthiness of its V- shaped hull that won it acceptance among Louisiana fishermen.

As the shrimpers ventured further offshore, the Florida trawler arrived on the scene. Sixty to ninety feet long, with its high sides and forward cabin, it was capable of weathering some of the gulf's

worst weather. Originally built of steamed oak, steel and even fibreglass hulls are also fairly common. The largest of these boats are sometimes refrigerated, but most have only insulated holds where ice will last 2 to 4 weeks.

Such a boat will typically pull two 50' trawls as well as a 16' try net. The small net is dropped and pulled in, dropped and pulled in, to determine where the shrimp are, and how full the large nets are likely to be.

On the smaller end of things the plywood Lafitte skiff and the aluminum chaland, or flatboat, are the queens of the inland waters. Often run by single individuals or husband and wife teams, they pull a single net.

The tradition of cypress boat building is very old in south Louisiana. Today people still build their own 50' and 60' trawlers in their front yards along Bayou Lafourche, then block the highway as they move it on rollers across.

Sugarcane

"They had a sugar house at Southdown, they had one ot Ashland, they had one at Myrtle Grove, one at Honduras and one at Ludivine Refinery at Terrebonne, way down Terrebonne. And then they had one at Bonvillian that's on Bayou Black. They had 6 or 7 sugarhouses in the Parish of Terrebonne. They use to cut cane by hand and load by hand put 'em in a wagon and pull 'em with mules, you know. Bring 'em to the mills then they had to throw that by hand in the cutter. They had no steam, nothin to operate, everything was by hand. Then some fellow would dry the sugar, some would boil it and the grinding would start around October, middle of October. Most people would depend on that for their year's work."

- HENRY HEBERT

On the natural levees of south Louisiana's bayous, sugar was king. Terrebonne Parish alone once had sixty- four mills. The "sugar families" controlled local society, determined credit at the bank, and employed a good percentage of their poorer neighbors each fall during "grinding season," the harvest Which began in mid- October.

Operations

"You get a row and you'd chop the bottom first and you run your blade, cane knife, on each side of it and you'd top it off see, of course today they burn it instead of doing all that and they cut it with a cane cutter and burn the shucks off but you had to take that

shuck off with that cane knife when you were cutting cane. They didn't want to burn it then."

- ABEL "T.P." PREJEAN

Cane is planted in six foot rows, usually in September. The first harvest comes eleven months later. Each year the cut down cane, or "stubble", grows a new crop, but each subsequent year, the sucrose content is less. After three to five years, it pays to replant.

At the mill, cane is washed, chopped, and crushed to extract the juice. The leftover pulp, bagasse, can be used for making paper. The juice is clarified then evaporated until a sticky syrup remains. When boiled to just the right degree and spun in a centrifugal, this syrup yeilds molasses and raw brown sugar.

In modern operations, the cane cutter, loader, and tractor have mechanized planting and harvesting. In the nineteenth century, however, the plantation ran on mules. Much of the acreage devoted to sugar production was actually growing corn-- corn to feed the mules which dragged the plows and pulled the wagons and dug the ditches and powered the hoists.

The animals were bought by carload in Kentucky and Missouri, worked their prime on sugar plantations, then were sold to small farmers. Rodeos were held to break in new mules. The plantation assigned each worker his own mule and harness, so that if he abused either, he would have to suffer for it.

Even after the rigors of plantation life, a mule could give years to someone who had lighter workloads and gave better care as an owner-operator. Long after they had been replaced by tractors, the

mules would still be kept on the plantations for jobs like keeping drains open.

Hauling cane to the mill was done with wagons, barges, and private, narrow gauge railroads called "dummies." The barges were pulled or pushed by a bow- or stern-wheeler, depending what the bayou allowed.

The buildings of the plantation, besides big house and workers' quarters, included many out buildings, sheds, and warehouses. If a mill were attached, the smokestacks, sugar warehouses, and mountains of bagasse dominated the terrain. There were often plantation stores, whose patronage was sometimes encouraged by paying wages in tokens. There might be machine shops to service the dummies, a ways to build the cypress barges. Around the middle of this century tractor hangars slowly replaced mule barns and harness sheds and corn cribs. Nearly disappeared are the derrick hoists that formerly marked every field road; they have been replaced by mechanized loaders.

SECTION III

THE PEOPLE

When the plantation bell was no longer in use to call the hands to work it was run from can to can't. The time you can go to work and the time you can't go to work meaning early morning and late at night.

- EFFIE BREAUX

Small Farms

"The small farmers had about...oh maybe 100 acres maybe 150 acres but they wouldn't cultivate all that you understand. It was only on the ridge on the bayou that they use to make...raise those sugarcane."

- LOUIS HEBERT

Squeezed in between the great plantations were small independent farms ("habitations"). Often on marginal lands, though sometimes, by length of tenure, on the choicest, they had not the size nor scale to compete with well run plantations for efficiency in growing sugar. However, the profitabilty of sugar in a good year was a lure hard to resist.

Even the smallest parcels had some cane, never more than the "habitant" and his family could cut, for they couldn't compete for hiring fieldhands; and rarely less than than their own needs, for they were usually paid in kind. The mill's barge and paddle-wheeler picked up your cut cane, then later dropped off the barrels of syrup and sugar that represented your share. Any payment in excess of this would likely be as a line of credit (or retirement of debt) at the plantation store.

One advantage small farms did have over the larger plantations was flexibility. Without the huge capital investment in one crop, they could more easily shift with the market. For instance it was small farmers, not the big plantations, that cashed in on the short lived easter lily boom of the 1940s.

Decline

"An expansion had taken place, they had borrowed money from banks and were unable to pay off the indebtedness. Why? In 1919 they were shooting for say 20 to 21 dollars a ton cane, this was what they were telling me was the history, they got less than $10 a ton for their cane. By the year 1931 sugar was selling for $3.50 a ton for cane. So it gives you an idea of what was really happening to the large plantation type farming that had taken place up until that time."

- MERLIN BASCAL

The precipitous drop in price described above was only one of a host of factors that dethroned King Sugar well before the Great Depression routed most of the rest of American farmers. From the late teens to the early thirties, if it could go wrong on sugar plantations, it did.

Next to price, the biggest problems were with the crop itself. The introduction of the POJ variety ("Product of Java") of cane from Indonesia did much to illiminate problems with the sugarcane borer. The tough POJ was simply too hard for the borer to bore through. Unhappily the same quality caused trouble at the mill, where grinding equipment had been designed for softer cane.

Though economically less relevant, to a generation of children a more serious problem with POJ was that it was too hard to chew. Kind hearted sugar planters began to put in a row or two of fat, soft Cuba cane along the edge of their fields for the schoolchildren to raid in the fall, before school let out for grinding season.

Even more serious than the sugarcane borer, mosaic disease stunted plant growth and reduced sugar content. Though battles against the pest have been won over the years, the war against mosaic disease continues.

World War I temporarily drove up the cost of the labor of both humans and mules. Though not as big a factor as after World War II, many former plantation workers fell to the sentiment so well described in that old doughboy favorite, "How We Gonna Get 'Em Back on the Farm, After They've Seen Paree?". Military service was the first travel many young men had experienced; they saw with their own eyes that there were easier lives than the ones they had left behind.

No one can say what the mules were thinking, pulling plows again after helping "caissons go rolling along". For them it was not dreams of a better life but rather the nightmare of a quick death, as anthrax anihilated herd after herd of plantation mules. Called "charbon" ("coal") in French because of the tell-tale black buboes, the disease was quick, deadly, and very contagious. Even many healthy animals were destroyed in the drastic measures that were periodically required to stop its spread.

Fortunes fell. Big houses were vacated. Land that had been valuable only as sugar land was being foreclosed on for the oil that might be under it. Sugarcane yielded to the soybean, or to development, for high land is scarce in coastal Louisiana. Mills

consolidated, closed, got packed up and shipped to Central America. Today co-ops, subsidies, and gasahol production combine to allow a risky, often meager profit from sugarcane. A thoroughly mechanized harvest rests in the hands of a specialized few. No longer is the whole town called out to work from "can to can't."

"Most of the people in this part of town use to work on the sugarcane farms ...they had a sugarcane plantation everywhere around here, that was the only source of livelihood at that time."

- CASTRO MURRAY

Oysters

"They go down there and pull 'em, dredge for oysters with oyster rakes....and they put them in a boat and bring them to Little Caillou...they'd schuck those oysters, clean 'em, wash 'em and can 'em and then they would ship 'em all over the country."

- RITA HOFFMAN

The oyster has been eaten in Louisiana, and indeed world round, since prehistoric times. The eastern oyster (Crassostrea virginica) has been available in New Orleans probably since its founding. Doubtlessly Jean Lafitte himself savored oysters, for his Barataria kingdom remains today one of the world's most productive oystering grounds.

Nearly a quarter-million acres of waterbottoms are privately leased as oyster beds in Louisiana. Sixteen thousand acres more serve as seed beds, controlled by the state as a nursery for oysters that will be transplanted to private reefs.

When oystermen work on a commercial scale, they are more properly farmers and not fishermen. Though they work from boats and pull their living from the bays and estuaries, their livlihood is a cycle of sowing and reaping.

Oysters are planted in September. One to two inch seed is hauled, boatload after boatload. If not eaten by predators, nor ruined by storm or flood, nor contaminated by pollution, oysters grow salty, fat, and tasty in Louisiana waters.

Another million acres are "public beds" where any oysters found are up for grabs. The commercial fishermen work these areas in late fall and winter. Refered to as "sack" oysters, they must be three inches long or longer for sale.

In early spring the oyster farmer moves to his planted beds. His daily catch can increase eight- or ten-fold. His take is no longer determined by what he can find, but instead now by what he has raised when the market is good, and by what he can sell when it is not.

Inland water bottoms along the coast, too shallow for the boats of commercial fishermen, are used by weekend fisherman, who with hatchet and one rubber glove can find enough for family's table or at least an impromptu meal. The location of a choice reef of such wild oysters ("raccoons" in the local French) is a secret well guarded in south Louisiana.

Technology

"In those days they didn't have many oyster dredges...it was all hand tongs in those days. Tong 'em by hand thats when they had good oysters in those days."

-EDMUND FAULK

Tongs, with rake-like jaws and ten to fifteen foot long wooden handles, were the traditional tool of the oyster men. The "griffe", or short-handled tongs, were sometimes used in shallower waters. Oysters are perishable. In the days of sail power, the oyster luggers were met at the farthest reaches of the bayous by cordelle teams of man and mule to pull the boat to market.

As in the shrimping industry, the introduction of the gasoline engine allowed a revolution in harvesting methods. The dredge, a heavy metal basket that drags the bottom scooping up oysters, allowed a huge reduction in the manpower needed to gather a given number of oysters. Commercial oystering was extended into areas further inland that had been considered insufficiently productive before.

Traditional enemies continue to plague the oyster industry. The two most serious are the oyster drill conch (Thais haemastoma, "bigarneau" in the local French, but not to be confused with the French shellfish of the same name); and the black drum fish (Pogonias cromis, "tambour"). Both species thrive with high salinity, making Louisiana's increasing problems with salt water intrusion bode poorly for the future of many beds.

In earlier days, when the inefficiency of tongs limited the size of cultivated beds, oystermen would sometimes literally fence in their beds with barriers built of cypress slats to keep the drum fish away. A school of drum, crunching the oysters between powerful jaws, could devour a bed in a few nights of gluttony.

An even more picturesque method was used against the oyster drill, the snail-like creatures that rasps a hole through the oyster's shell with its tongue. The large fan-shaped leaves of the palmetto ("latanier") were embedded by their stems into the bottom of the bed. The tops of their leaves remained exposed above the surface. Like moths to a flame, the oyster drills will crawl to the top of the leaves and die in the sun. If he's lucky. For the creatures, while notorious for their stench when cooking, are considered a delicacy by many in south Louisiana. To let them die on palmetto is considered a waste.

Today pollution, primarily from municipal and agricultural runoff, is the greatest worry of the oystermen. Thousands of acres have closed, some semi- permanently. Depuration, allowing the oyster to purify itself with fresh water is only in experimental stages, though the process has been used for clams on the east coast for over twenty years.

The industry's problems notwithstanding, Louisiana produces ten million pounds of oyster meat a year, highest of the Gulf states. The returning oysterman's lugger, deck piled high with oysters hemmed in by fences built onto the boat, nearly awash under the load, is not yet an uncommon site on Louisiana's coastal bayous.

Packing

"We were the, actually, the developers of an oyster shucking machinery. The secret of automatic oyster shucking was the cooking timing. Whereas the eye of the oyster was unglued from the shell and then from those vats we ran that through a big 6 foot cylinder and we'd

pick up the oyster and drop it and as we dropped it the meat would come out of the oyster and slip through the rings into brine and the shell would continue on and be conveyed away. Then the oyster would float in the brine and with a pump circulatory system we'd wash the oyster out of that tank into inspection belts and from there on to the canning process."

- A. J. BUQUET

Fresh Louisiana oysters, packed in ice, became a delicacy for gourmets in America's fancy restaurants soon after the coming of the railroad. For a long time, however, the bulk of the output not sold locally was canned.

Canning plants opened on the lower reaches of many Louisiana bayous, sometimes combined with shrimp canneries. Until the introduction of automated shucking, described above, armies of shuckers were needed to open the oysters by hand. In the hands of an experienced shucker the blade of the oyster knife might seem like a sixth finger. Speed is important; shuckers are paid by the sack.

Ironically, the widespread use of refrigeration meant that once again oysters would be shucked by hand. No method has been yet devised that will neither physically damage the oyster nor change its flavor. Most oysters are shipped blast frozen or refrigerated. In the latter condition they will keep about a month. The biggest markets are in North Carolina, Virginia, and Maryland, where Louisiana's finest are doubtlessly passed off as the local product.

Cultural Impact

Traditionally, the city of Houma on Bayou Terrebonne was known as the "Oyster Capital". Today the title is being challenged by other places. The Bayou Lafourche town of Galliano hosts the Oyster Festival in July (the oysterman's slow season). One of the most popular festivals of the region, it is sometimes kicked off by a festive boat parade.

Many of the oyster grounds around Houma have been destroyed by pollution or high salinity. Modern highways have decreased the importance of its rail head. But when the roads were still dirt and sometimes mud, the refuse of Houma's oyster industry provided public improvements as well as public outcry.

"Later on they put oyster shells on the street and the people of Houma hit the ceiling and said gracious sake you gonna cut all the horses' hoofs. We won't be able to travel, it'll ruin all our carriages and all our horses. But they, the engineers, the city engineer at that time described that they needed some surface and they didn't have anything. They didn't know what to do so they spread oyster shells on the streets."

- RALPH BISLAND

Oystering has even entered into the local mythology. One variant of the loup-garou, or werewolf legend, has the creature returning each night to the oystermen's boats as they sleep in palmetto shacks ashore. The loup-garou in a night will do the work of a dozen men, breaking the clusters of oysters into singles for sacking. But then he takes his pay, eating half of what he has culled.

Other Fall Activities

October and November are the best months to go "au flambeau", literally "to the torch." The activity so named is flounder gigging. Flounder (Paralichthys lethostigna; "plie", not "sole", in the local dialect) are the flat fish best known for having both eyes on the same side of its head. They may be caught on a line or in a trawl, but the traditional method is to gig them with an unbarbed spear.

Flounder bury themselves on shallow sand flats at night to wait for prey. They become the prey themselves when fishermen, by carrying torch or lantern for light, can spot their outline from eye level. Besides the gig (broom handle with steel point), the flambeau (usually a Coleman lantern), necessary equipment is an oyster sack, to carry the fish in.

Care must be taken when gigging flounders not to gig a sting ray, which similarly bury themselves and can inflict painful wounds.

PART III THE ACADIAN HISTORY

ACADIAN ORIGINS IN FRANCE

Carl A. Brasseaux

Preliminary Demographic Studies

Over the years, Acadian historiography has focused upon the Grand Derangement, the term by which the Acadian diaspora of 1755 has become popularly known. Far less attention has been devoted to the evolution of pre-dispersal Acadian society, and significantly less still to the French origins of the Acadian population. Indeed, only two preliminary studies to date have dealt with the latter subject.(1) Though superficial and though primarily genealogical in focus, these studies have nevertheless shattered many long-standing misconceptions regarding pre-colonial Acadian society. For decades, scholars and laymen alike believed that most of the Acadian colonists were originally Normans, a misconception created by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's 1847 epic Evangeline and perpetuated by historical literature. This misconception lives on today in Louisiana through the so-called authentic "Evangeline" costume, a seventeenth-century Norman outfit consisting of light blue skirt, white apron and blouse, and black corset.

The preponderance of evidence, however, indicates that these traditional images of the early Acadians have no basis on fact. Indeed, not only did only one Norman family settle in seventeenth-century Acadia, but the pre-dispersal Acadian pioneers, particularly the women who had "a passion for scarlet cloth,"(2) generally wore brightly colored costumes often consisting of stripped

cloth. Yet the stereotype was not entirely without foundation, for Dthe French colonists who settled Acadia were in fact a remarkably homogenous group--the result of the circumstances under which the Canadian colony was settled.

Between 1632 and 1654, when most Acadia-bound French colonists crossed the Atlantic, Acadia was a proprietary colony operated by the Company of New France. The Company maintained a recruiting office in La Chaussee, Poitou Province, France, operated by the local notary Vincent Landry. Fifty-five percent (and possibly as much as seventy percent) of Acadia's seventeenth-century immigrants were natives of the Centre-Ouest provinces of Poitou, Aunis, Angoumois, and Saintonge (all southeast and east-southeast of Brittany) or the adjacent province of Anjou, while forty-seven percent were drawn from the La Chausse area alone.(3) At least twenty-two of the fifty-two families (42.3 percent) listed in the 1671 census of Acadia were peasants (laboureurs) drawn from the estate of Charles Menou d'Aulnay, acting governor of Acadia for most of the proprietary period, which lay approximately three and one-half miles northwest of La Chaussee.(4) In 1644 alone, Aulnay, who had personally undertaken a disastrous recruiting tour of the Centre Ouest four years earlier, handpicked at least twenty families (approximately 60 persons) there in 1644 for settlement as engagés in Acadia.(5) Many other recruits (perhaps as many as six additional families) were also probably drawn from the Aulnay seigneurie or from Loudun, the regional commercial and religious center, 10.62 linear miles north of La Chausee.

Table I

LaChaussee to Aulnay	3.27 miles
Aulnay to Loudun	7.35 miles

According to Genevieve Massignon, pioneer French linguist who first attempted to trace the Acadian community's demographic roots, Acadian settlers were also drawn from the following provinces:

Table II

(Birthplaces of Those Settlers Who Established Themselves in Acadia between 1632 and 1671)

Place of origin — Families in 1671 Census of Acadia

Aulnay Seigneurie: Babin, Belliveau, Blanchard, Bourque, Brault, Dupuis, Gaudet, Gautereau, Girouard, Hebert, Landry, LeBlanc, Poirier, Robichaux, Savoie, Theriot.

Probably from Aulnay Seigneurie or Loudun: Bertrand, Brun, Guerin, Joffriau (Joffrian?), Morin, Raimbault

Anjou: Martin, Trahan

Aunis: Boudreaux, Cormier, Guilbeau, Melanson (La Verdure)

Brie: Bourgeois, Doucet, Dugas

Centre-Ouest: Comeau, Daigle (Daigre), Thibodeaux

Champagne: Pesselin

England: Granger

Flanders: Pitre I

Irish: Casey (Quessy, Roger)

Normandy: Mius d'Entremont

Unknown: Belou, Claude, Corperon, Cyr (Sire), Forest (Foret), Gougeou, Labatte, Lanoue (Lalloue?), Martin (second branch of family), Pellerin, Petitpas, Poulet, Richard, Vincent.

As indicated in Table II, forty-three percent (16 of 37) of those families whose place of origin is known (sixty percent [22 of 37] if Ione includes those six families thought by Massignon to have come from the Aulnay seigneurie or Loudun) were drawn from the sud-Loudunais area. This percentage was diluted somewhat by the trickle of French immigrants into Acadia between 1671 and 1713, but the sud-Loudunais element remained the nucleus of the pre-dispersal Acadian population. And the significance of the Aulnay/sud-Loudunais group becomes even more apparent when one considers the fecundity of this group, which quickly absorbed all other subregional French cultures with which it came into contact. In 1671, these families constituted between 40 and 54 percent of the total Acadian population, depending upon whether or not those probably recruited in the Aulnay/Loudun region are included or not. By the twentieth century, their descendants constituted between 80 and 90 percent of the Acadian population in Canada's Maritime Provinces and a like proportion in Louisiana. An understanding of the French origins of this group is therefore fundamental to any discussion of the group's North American evolution.

Environment, Life Style and Material Culture

While there is scant published material on the birthplaces of the Acadian pioneers, there is practically no reference whatsoever to their

economic, religious and social backgrounds in Acadian historiography. A survey of secondary materials on the Poitou/Centre Ouest region during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, however, sheds considerable light on the life style, traditional values, and customs of the region's substantial peasant class. Such information is crucial to any understanding of the North American birth of the Acadian culture, for this peasant way of life and outlook were transported across the Atlantic.

The area's relatively lush (for France), gently rolling landscape was better suited to livestock production, but less well adapted to farming than the more fertile, riverbottom lands of the neighboring Orleanais area. At the dawn of the seventeenth century, the green fields of the sud-Loudunais were divided into large square, rectangular, or trapezoidal plots of land, all separated from one-another by ditches complemented by formidable rows of "hedges, shrubs and trees."(6) These fields, thus insulated from one-another, were internally divided by movable fences. Communication through the area was achieved by sunken, tree-lined lanes which, morning and eventide, were congested with small herds of livestock and their human escorts. These assemblages proceeded to, and from, the many hamlets that dotted the region (there being few genuine towns or cities in the region).(7)

Peasant houses of the sud-Loudunais during this period were "low" structures built of mud and roofed with thatch or reeds (sometimes gorse stalks). Some peasant homes also contained an extension, or creche, for the livestock, usually actually owned by the landlord,

which was heated by the peasant residence (apparently through a common chimney).(8) The creche also typically served as a makeshift blacksmith shop, which the peasantry maintained in defiance of seigneurial monopolies upon the fabrication of iron products. The farmstead also usually contained at least two outbuildings. The most significant of these was a shed housing a crude cart or carts (used to carry straw, firewood, gorse stalks, and "ferns"), and a more substantial cart, used for the harvest. Nearby was a pigsty, typically occupied by a single sow and her piglets, flanked by the farmstead's dunghill. Between the house/creche, the shed(s) and the pigsty was a well-trod area used by the farmstead's peasant occupants to process their harvest.(9)

Directly behind this modest complex of buildings lay the peasants' garden or gardens. As with the larger fields elsewhere in the seigneurie, the garden(s) were set off from the remainder of the seigneur's estate by a ditch and an accompanying wall of shrubbery. These plots--there were often three or four--were devoted to specific plants. One of these was always a vegetable garden, a second probably given over to medicinal and fragrant herbs and plants, while a third a was often an orchard planted with a great variety of fruit trees. At the dawn of the seventeenth century, this region was reknowned for its pear trees, a local variety that produced a small, but highly flavorful fruit used to make cider. In the early years of the century, however, apple trees were introduced from Normandy and they soon supplanted

pears as the most common fruit tree in the area. Most of the fruit not used in cider production was stored on shelves in especially designed buildings.(10)

Beyond the gardens lay the property (or properties) worked by the peasants. The amount of property available to them reflected their socio-economic position within the peasant caste. During the seventeenth century, the French peasantry was divided into five de facto classes: At the very bottom of this hierarchy lay the journaliers, landless day laborers who usually could not find steady employment. Because such unskilled workers perennially encountered great difficulty in making a living, some peasants abandoned the land and sought gainful employment as artisans or craftsmen. Only slightly better off than the journaliers, and often less affluent that the artisans were the métayers, landless sharecroppers "who were either too poor either to pay a money-rent or to stock a farm." These tenants often paid fifty percent or more of their crop in rental payments to their landlord. Far more secure were the laboureurs, "a kind of peasant-aristocracy [which] owned enough land to make a good living from it."(11) Laboureurs often tilled five or more hectares (at least 11.15 acres) for which they had to provide the necessary farming implements, carts, and teams of work animals. To succeed they also had to coax from exhausted lands crops sufficiently large to support themselves and to pay the heavy seigneurial fees extracted by the aristocracy.(12)

The laboureurs, who were noted for their industriousness, were a vital cog in late ancien régime agriculture and the keystone of Acadia's economic development. According to the 1671 census, forty-eight of the sixty-three male heads of households (76 percent) were laboureurs, a designation which, the fragmentary evidence suggests, accurately reflects their pre-colonial status.(13) Why, then, did these seemingly secure farmers leave their homes for the rigors of the Acadian frontier, particularly when the farming classes were repeatedly characterized as "très sédentaire parce que physiquement attaché au sol natal"?(14)

Perhaps they sought to escape the violence that had disrupted their lives and destroyed what generations of their families had sought to build.Because Poitou and the Centre-Ouest were bastions of Protestantism, these provinces were the scene of some of the most intense fighting during France's religious wars of the late sixteenth century. Fighting between Catholic and Protestant sects erupted at Poitiers in 1559 and within two years the entire region was consumed by the increasingly bitter civil warfare. Much of the fighting in the 1560s centered in Haute-Poitou, from which most of the Acadian settlers were drawn. The Aulnay, then solidly in the Huguenot camp, was one of the three Haute-Poitou families that organized a major military offensive which succeeded in taking Loudun and several other Poitevin cities.(15)

The Protestant occupation of these communities was challenged by Catholic forces and the resulting confrontations, which continued until

the Edict of Nantes (1598), "ravaged" the entire region. During the fighting, many of the worst atrocities of the religious wars were committed in Poitou, and the population had to be constantly on guard against attacks by marauding bands of religious fanatics, foraging mercenaries, and brigands capitalizing upon the breakdown in local law enforcement machinery. The civilian population was, nevertheless, subjected to "pillages, incendies, voils, tortues et massacres, a peine tempérés dans les périodes d'accalmie par la placidité et l'esprit naturel de tolérance des populations locales qui favorisent les efforts des 'politiques'.(16)

These excesses aainst the peasantry--which finally precipitated a series of peasant revolts in the Centre Ouest during the mid-1790's--persisted well into the seventeenth century. The era of relative peace and stability following promulgation of the Edict of Nantes was shattered by Henry IV's assassination in 1610. Protestant-Catholic disputes began at Poitiers in 1614 and persisted in Poitou until 1616, when an accord signed at Loudun by the French regent and the realm's Huguenot leaders guaranteed the seigneurial rights of France's Protestant princes. In 1620, however, peace was disrupted once again in Poitou and the Centre-Ouest by the opening shots of the French Counter Regormation, and from 1625 to 1628, the Centre Ouest was once again the major theatre of France's continuing internecine conflict while, Poitou once again became a staging and foraging area for the rival forces.(17)

The fighting, which ended with the fall of La Rochelle in 1628, brought much misery in its wake. Years of unseasonable weather bought famine and a series of epidemics, "la peste de 1631" being the worst epidemic in modern French history, subsequently decimated the peasant and urban populations between Poitiers and the ocean.(18)

The years of trauma stemming from decades of civil warfare, heightened by the famines and epidemics of the early 1630s, produced intense emotional stress in Haute Poitou which eventually vented itself in the highly publicized Loudun witch hunt of 1634.(19) This pervasive sense of despair apparently motivated many sud-Loudunais peasants to begin life anew in North America in 1632. For these pioneers, the hardships they faced were more palatable than the misery they left behind.

Le Noble Est L'Araignée ùet le Paysan la Mouche

Under the best of circumstances, the life of a peasant, even a laboureur, was difficult. His one-room dwelling was sparsely furnished with "a rough table, a kneading-trough, a bench and some miserable bedding." The peasant's wardrobe was as coarse as his furnishings, and because of taxes on leather goods, he wore sabots in inclement weather, or went barefoot when conditions permitted. The only clothes he owned were generally those he carried on his back, and these were worn until they were threadbare and tattered. According to French historian Pierre Goubert, these rags were "never washed . . . and appeared as though they had been passed from one generation to the next."(15)

The peasant's diet also reflected his harsh circumstances. Living constantly under the specter of famine and disease--products of civil warfare, crop failures due to unseasonal weather, and primitive agricultural practices--the peasant endured a hand-to-mouth existence based upon a protein-deficient diet. Peasant produced wheat, but in small quantities as payment for seigneurial fees, and rye was their principal crop. Rye was thus the staple of their diet, which consisted of a monotonous routine of black bread, turnips and cabbage soup, cheese or butter, and water. Beef was consumed only on rare occasions, though salt pork--derived from acorn-fattened piglets in the farmstead's small pigsty--graced the peasant's table several times a year. (The resulting protein-deficiency is seen most strikingly in the diminutive stature of the peasant-soldiers in ancien régime France who generally stood between 4 feet, six inches and five feet étall.)(20) The wretched diet, clothing and housing of Loire Valley peasants in the seventeenth century is best described in the contemporary Mémoires des Intendants:

> ...Les pays vivent de pain fait avec du blé noir; d'autres qui n'ont pas même du blé noir, vivent de racines de fougère bouillés avec de la farine d'orge ou d'avoine et du sel...Mais ou l'on connait mieux que partout ailleurs la misère des paysans, c'est dans leurs maisons, ou l'on voit une misère extrême. On les trouve couchés sur la paille; point d'habits que ceux qu'ils portent, qui sont fort méchants; point de meublers, point de provisions pour la vie; enfin, tout y marque la nécessité.(21)

The gloom of their daily existence was pierced only infrequently by public celebrations surrounding Catholic feast days. Peasants particularly relished country dances, where men and women " danced

heartily" even without musical accompaniment; but these diversions could never long divert their attention from harsh reality. Existence demanded frugality and guile, particularly the ability to protect their interests from parasitic seigneurs, churchmen and royal officials. La gabelle, the royal monopoly on salt in many western provinces and the resulting price gouging on this vital commodity, for example, were directly responsible for the absence of pork from the peasant diet, for pork required vast quantities of salt for preservation. The salt levies were supplemented by the taille, the annual parishwide tax on either income or property. Much of what remained of the peasant's paltry income was taken by oppressive seigneurial fees which claimed as much as one-half of a peasant's crop.(22)

Pre-revolutionary France maintained the ancient Roman concept of "degrees" of land ownership. In seventeenth-century France, only ten percent of all land was owned outright, usually by the crown. THus, though the typical peasant believed he "owned" his land and could sell it and actually bequeath it to his children, all such conveyances were subject to the approval of the local lord, who assessed heavy fees (commonly twelve to twenty-four percent of the sale price) for such transactions. The local seigneur also held exclusively civil and criminal jurisdiction over the lands held by the peasantry. But the most onerous verstige of the nobility's feudal right to the land was the annual levy of property taxes known collectively as cens. These taxes, which usually paid in kind in the form of agricultural produce.(23)

The peasant class had to rely upon its wits to survive. Unable to achieve what was then unthinkable--a fundamental change in the system--the peasants attempted, often successfully, to shield themselves from their overlords either through trickery, by feigning ignorance, or more commonly, by resorting to "passive disobedience." Passive disobedience usually took the form of delayed payments or services, a ploy peasants used most successfully in times of turmoil, or when the lord was "old, senile, or absent, or [when] his succession was disputed." In addition, whenever an heir, particularly a young noble, ascended to local power, peasants invariably denied that many of his legal seigneurial privileges had ever existed.(24)

Opposition to seigneurial rights and privileges was effective only when the peasantry closed ranks and presented a common front.. In Poitou, and throughout the Centre Ouest, such unity was maintained by the unusual cohesiveness of extended families, an apparent by-product of the circumstances under which the region had been settled. These areas had been largely depopulated during the 100 Years War and what had been productive lands had become a wilderness overgrown with shrubs and trees. Restoration of these lands was indeed a formidable task, and landholders consequently succeeded in attracting to the area only small numbers of peasants, even after extending to laborers generous inducements for settling on their properties. The new settlers earned these modest benefits, for not only was the task of clearing the land arduous, but the labor shortage extended the duration of a task that grew more difficult with each passing year. Because the demands of

operating an established farmstead generally taxed a nuclear family to its physical limits, those few independent, but pragmatic peasants who answered the call were thus forced to pool their labor supply to survive.(25)

By the seventeenth century, this region of France boasted the realm's most intricate and cohesive extended family system. According to the studies of Jean-Baptiste Michon, an eighteenth century cleric and genealogist, the typical seventeenth century peasant household in this area consisted of three generations of the resident nuclear family, several in-laws and their children, and often an orphaned relative or two.(26)

The Catholic Church

The rancor which often characterized the interaction of the extended peasant families and the local nobility was entirely absent in the relationships between the peasantry and the other pillar of the French theocracy--the Catholic church. One should not interpret their passivity as a manifestation of harmony, however. While it is true that peasants almost universally availed themselves of the sacraments and dutifully attended mass each Sunday, they often did so more out of custom than faith. The concensus among seventeenth century French historians is that peasants revered a curious mixture of Christian and pagan beliefs:

> Il semble sur que la plupart des paysans devaient éprouver une sorte de foi élémentaire, réduite aux rudiments, et que cette foi coulaient autant de résidus des vieux paganismes, des cultes de la nature, de l'astrologie et de la démonolatrie que d'elements authentiquement chrétiens.(27)

It would thus appear that many, if not most, early seventeenth century French peasants were only nominally Catholic. Their special brand of Catholicism resulted from two contemporary influences. First, local pastors were quite often incompetent. France's first Catholic seminary opened in 1660, as a response to the appalling ignorance and malfeasance of French clerics. In the typical rural parish-

> le catéchisme n'est pas souvent ni surtout régulièrement fait, les sacrements administres un peu au hasard, les messes celebrées avec une rigueur variable et dans un relatif désordre dans le 'saint lieu', les sermons réduits a peu de chose, ou bien incomprehensibles, ou bien très familiers.(28)

More serious, perhaps, was the violent behavior, public drunkenness, and womanizing/or homosexuality of many clergymen. The pervasiveness of these problems was revealed in the mid-seventeenth century when the bishop of Beauvais investigated each of the 438 priests in his jurisdiction and discovered that "plus de trois cents frequentaient trop les dames, ou le cabaret, ou les deux à la fois." Many other clerics bore arms in contravention of church policy.(29)

The French peasantry tolerated the clergy's frequent public exhibitions of human frailty (their foibles becoming the butt of popular jokes) as long as their behavior remained within socially acceptable bounds. This is not to say that all peasants were complacent about the clergy's deficiencies or the pervasive public apathy about religion. Many peasants in the Centre Ouest and Poitou were among the first French converts to Calvinism, including perhaps the twenty or twenty-two families of Acadian settlers who may have followed the Aulnays--their seigneurs--into the Huguenot fold in the

late sixteenth century. But, whatever their religious affiliation, the noncombatant peasants, who had witnessed France's seemingly interminable Civil War fought literally in their own backyards, had learned not only to distance themselves from their own faith (for their own protection), but also to develop a live and let live attitude toward their neighbors' beliefs and affairs. These beliefs constitute but one facet of the cultural baggage carried to North America by Acadia's seventeenth century pioneers. The many cultural institutions that survived transplantation intact, or with only minor environmental adaptations, gave Acadian society its distinctive character, which mirrored its Poitou and Centre-Ouest origins.

SYNOPSIS

The Acadian pioneers were drawn primarily from the French province of Poitou. A substantial minority was also drawn from an adjacent region of western France known as the Centre Ouest. The vast majority of the Acadian also shared a common socio-economic heritage. Fully three-fourths of the settlers in the 1671 census of Acadia were former peasants of the laboureur caste. Laboureurs constituted the highest of the five peasant classes in ancien regime France. Industrious, frugal, and tied together by an intricate extended family system, they shared a deep and abiding attachment to the land they farmed. Only the religious wars of late sixteenth and early seventeenth century France, which destroyed the meagre economic gains of their families, could have uprooted them from their home provinces and driven them across the Atlantic, into the Maritime Canadian wilderness. Their peasant heritage would profoundly influence the course of Acadian cultural development.

FOOTNOTES

1. Genevieve Massignon, Les Parlers français d'Acadie, 2 vols. (Paris, 1962); Nicole T. Bujold, Les Origines françaises des premières familles acadiennes: Le Sud Loudunais (Poitiers, 1979).

2. John B. Brebner, New England's Outpost (1927; reprint ed., Hamden, Ct., 1965), p. 40.

3. Massignon, Les Parlers français , pp. 70-72; Bujold and Caillebeau, Les Origines , pp. 11-33.

4. Bujold and Caillebeau, Les Origines , p. 25.

5. Ibid.

6. Pierre Goubert, La Vie quotidienne des paysans français au XVIIe siecle (Paris, 1982), p. 27.

7. Ibid.

8. The creche was, more rarely, a separate structure. Ibid., p. 28.

9. Ibid.

10. The buildings used to store fruit had convex walls. Ibid., pp. 28-29.

11. John Lough, An Introduction to Seventeenth Century France (New York, 1954), pp. 4-5.

12. Goubert, Vie quotidienne, p. 47.

13. Recensement de 1671, Acadia, photostatic copy printed in Donald J. Hebert, comp., Acadians in Exile (Cecilia, La., 1980), pp. 459-471.

14. Goubert, Vie quotidienne, p. 41.

15. Ibid., p. 63; Edmond-Rene Labande, et al., Histoire du Poitou, du Limousin et des Pays Charentais: Aunis, Saintonge, Angoumois (Toulouse, France, 1976), pp. 241-242; hereinafter cited as Histoire du Poitou.

16. Ibid., p. 240.

17. Ibid., pp. 247-248, 251-255.

18. Ibid., p. 255.

19. See Robert Mandrou, La Possession de Loudun (Paris, 1970); and Aldous Huxley, The Devils of Loudun (New York, 1952).

20. See, for example, the physical descriptions of military passengers aboard royal ships in the following documents: Passenger list of the Union, 1719. AC, F5b, 27: no. 18; Passenger list of the Union, May 27, 1719. AC, G1, 464:no. 14; List of passengers aboard the Marie, 1719. AC, F5b, 37:no. 13; Passenger list for the Marechal d'Estrées, August 19, 1719. AC, G1, 464:no. 22.

21. Lough, Seventeenth Century France, p. 22.

22. Ibid., pp. 19-20; Goubert, Vie quotidienne, pp. 42-43.

23. Goubert, Vie quotidienne, pp. 42-43.

24. Ibid., p. 44.

25. Histoire de Poitou pp. 205, 209-211, 213-214, 220.

26. Goubert, Vie quotidienne, pp. 104-106.

27. Ibid., p. 219.

28. Ibid., p. 213.

29. Ibid., p. 214.

FOUR HUNDRED YEARS OF ACADIAN LIFE IN NORTH AMERICA: AN OVERVIEW

Carl A. Brasseaux

"It had a half chapter about our state's [Indiana's] political climate, as so far as I could tell, it must have been written after a careful examination of the situation in California."

Arnold Sawislak

The Acadian ethos was forged in the Canadian wilderness and tempered by alternating periods of isolation and subjugation. The typical pre-dispersal Acadian cherished land, family and personal dignity above all else. Having emigrated from France prior to the rise of capitalism, he was not materialistic in the modern sense of the term. Indeed, he sought only a comfortable existence, producing small agricultural surpluses in order to acquire European manufactured goods to ameliorate his often harsh existence--never for conspicuous consumption.

These common values were perpetuated by the increasingly common endogamous marriages in the Acadian community and the resulting reinforcement of group boundaries. Group boundaries coincided with extended families, and, as the Acadian settlements were peopled by the intermarried descendants of the 1632 immigrants, the Acadian community did, in fact, constitute one large clan. This complex network of human relationships quickly became so tightly interwoven that by 1700, the Acadians had come to consider themselves as a distinctive people. Indeed, the Acadians were the first European immigrant group to develop a distinctly North American identity.

Though a powerful influence in the Acadians' daily lives, the extended family never completely overwhelmed the individual. On the contrary, the Acadian frontiersman was fiercely individualistic. Producing all of the essentials of life himself--from food, to clothing, to shelter--the Acadian depended upon no one for his livelihood. Moreover, though land titles were vested in a small number of French stockholders in the colony's proprietary government, enforcement of the absentee concessionaires' tenuous titles to immense tracts of land in Acadia was initially so lax that the Acadians residing outside the colonial capital of Port Royal essentially became freeholders. Practice was translated into political reality in the early eighteenth century as the newly installed British colonial government invalidated the titles of absentee landholders. Thus, by the mid-eighteenth century, the typical Acadian recognized subservience to no landlord, and the feudalistic trappings of the colony's early landholding system were but memories.

The metamorphosis of the colony's land tenure system enhanced the personal individualism of the landholders. Property rights were jealously guarded and maintained against all rival claimants, even against relatives. As master of his modest farm, the Acadian frontiersman bowed to no man. Nor would he brook any interference in his private affairs. Thus, by 1700, the typical Acadian had come to view both the provincial government and the Catholic Church as merely necessary evils, tolerated solely for the basic services they provided. Any deviation from the parameters of accepted administrative

functions was considered an unjustified encroachment on personal liberties and met with a swift and strongly negative response. Indeed, the Acadians demonstrated no hesitancy whatsoever in protesting to higher authorities the activities of their local secular and religious representatives. When active resistance proved unfeasible, the Acadians often foiled unpopular administrative programs through procrastination and by passive resistance. Faced by external pressure from a hostile, or at least unsympathetic government, the Acadians drew upon their now mature group consciousness, formed a united front, and dealt with their antagonists only through popularly elected representatives.

The unshakable unity and basic cultural homogeneity of the exiles permitted them to weather the rigors of establishing a new homeland--a New Acadia--in semitropical Louisiana. The region's war and humid environment, nevertheless, quickly affected the nascent colony; scores, if not hundreds, of Acadians succumbed to epidemics of endemic fevers and other diseases. Nevertheless, once acclimated to the climate, the exiles quickly adapted their diverse economic pursuits to the region's terrain, long growing season, and hot, humid temperatures. Moreover, as the various waves of Acadian immigrants were providentially placed on lands not dissimilar to those of their original, Nova Scotian settlements, adaptation was correspondingly easy. It is thus hardly surprising that most Acadians attained their pre-dispersal standard of living within a decade of their arrival in Louisiana. Though prosperity initially provided the exiles with sufficient economic

independence to rebuild their world and pursue their own life style, continued accumulation of wealth over several decades by industrious Acadians held the threat of rapid cultural disintegration. Economic stagnation had existed in la vieille Acadie, but wealth had not been synonymous with social position. In Louisiana's emerging slave society, however, accumulation of wealth, and particularly human chattel, automatically gave one social status.

First generation Acadian immigrants remained unimpressed by the aristocratic trappings incumbent upon slave ownership, and, although some exiles acquired black field hands and wetnurses in the 1770s and 1780s, their simple, pastoral existance remained basically unaltered. But children and grandchildren in such prosperous Acadian households clearly envied the prestige enjoyed by their Creole neighbors and consciously attempted to alter their lifestyle to gain acceptance by their social "betters." In the early nineteenth century and throughout the antebellum period (1812-1860), upwardly mobile, second and third generation Louisiana Acadians modeled their existence upon that of the Creole planter class, purchasing large numbers of slaves, engaging in large-scale staple-crop production, building ostentatious homes, dabbling in thoroughbred horse racing, and educating their children in distant boarding schools. The most prosperous members of the emerging Acadian "establishment" also sought to marry their children into prominent Creole families.

Such cultural apostasy was atypical, although Acadian planters became more numerous in the original (colonial) Acadian settlement sites during the twilight years of the antebellum period. Throughout

the early nineteenth century, most Acadians preferred the less ostentatious existence of their forebears. Outside of the plantation areas, only a small minority of Acadians owned slaves, and most landholders continued to engage in small-scale farming and ranching. In addition, the petit habitant's lodging remained the one or two-room, raised cottage. Pressures from the rapid evolution of South Louisiana society nevertheless took their toll. Because of the early nineteenth-century exodus of Acadians fleeing levee maintenance and the scarcity of available land in the waterbottom areas, the Acadians remaining along the Mississippi River and bayous Teche and Lafourche became socially and culturally isolated. Moreover, because their landholdings were generally too small to engage in commercial agriculture and because they usually lacked the funds to expand their farms, especially at inflationary antebellum land prices, many Acadians were compelled to abandon traditional agricultural pursuits in order to survive economically. These Acadians found ready employment in the sugar industry as overseers, artisans and laborers, but, having lost their economic independence, these workers became the first casualties of the creeping Americanization of the region.

Further erosion of traditional Acadian life was accelerated by the outbreak of the Civil War. The growing sectional strife characterizing American politics in the late antebellum period and culminating in the nation's tragic fratricidal conflict had been of little interest to Louisiana's Acadians. Indeed, until the 1840s, most Acadians, particularly the petits habitants, had preferred to shun politics

altogether. But, in the 1840s, the growing popularity of Jacksonian ideology, as articulated by the state's Democratic party, coupled with Acadian Alexandre Mouton's emergence as the party's champion, lured hundreds of previously apolitical Acadians into the Democratic camp. By the 1850s, the Acadians had become the backbone of the Democratic party in South Louisiana.

The political vision of these Democratic recruits commonly extended no further than the parish boundary. National politics thus held little appeal for the Acadians. National issues, however, became increasingly difficult to ignore in the turbulent decade before the Civil War. State and local politicians used the emotional national questions of slavery and national unity to generate frenzied support for their respective parties at the numerous barbeques and rallies inevitably preceding Louisiana elections.

Among the most popular of the late antebellum stump speakers in South Louisiana was former Governor Alexandre Mouton, whose fiery Southern-rights oratory did much to shape public opinion among poor Acadians regarding the nation's rapidly intensifying sectional confrontation. It is thus hardly surprising that, while most Acadian planters voted for moderate Cooperationist candidates in the 1860 election, the vast majority of petits habitants, who looked to the Acadian community's elder statesman for political leadership, overwhelmingly supported the secessionist ticket.

The pro-secessionist Acadian voters soon reaped a bitter harvest. Louisiana quickly joined its sister states of the Gulf South in severing their ties with the federal government, and civil warfare was the inevitable result. Acadians, however, were initially unaffected by the outbreak of hostilities, though many scions of Acadian planter families quickly volunteered for service in the Confederate army. As the South's military fortunes dimmed in 1862, and as the fratricidal conflict assumed a regional focus, many petits habitants became the unwilling victims of Confederate conscription units.

The resulting Acadian resentment for the Confederate government was further inflamed by the confiscation of Acadian livestock and grain by the Confederate army. Acadian conscripts consequently deserted their Confederate units in droves whenever the rebel army retreated in the face of periodic Union invasions of South Louisiana. Free from their effective bondage in the army, the deserters greeted the invaders as liberators, but their cheers were soon replaced by grumbling as the men in blue proved more oppressive than their Confederate counterparts. Indeed, unlike the rebel army, which foraged in the fertile bayou country only when necessary, the Union forces sought to destroy the region's agricultural bounty and thus deprive the enemy of a valuable supply base.

Consequently faced with starvation, the ever-present threat of destruction by the rival armies, and the possibility of arrest and execution for desertion, the Acadians were again caught in a crossfire between distant powers. Once again, the Acadians were victimized by a

cause which they generally did not espouse, and, once again, they had witnessed the ruthless destruction of the fruit of their labors in the preceding decades. Once again, their homeland lay in ashes.

The task of rebuilding was complicated not only by the political turbulence that plagued Louisiana between 1865 and 1877, but also by significant social and economic changes that accelerated the transformation of the transplanted Acadian society into the indigenous Louisiana Cajun culture. Class distinctions, which had emerged in the antebellum period, became more pronounced as the educated elite turned its back on its heritage altogether to avoid the onerous social stigma borne in the postbellum period (1866-1899) by those identified increasingly as "Cajuns" (an Anglo corruption of "Acadians"), the apparent result of much unfavorable publicity by the Northern popular press. Even the newly emancipated freedmen, who formerly constituted the doormat of local society, quickly came to view their Cajun neighbors with derision.

Abandoned by the group's antebellum leadership element and under mounting pressure to conform to the Anglo-American norm, many Acadians found themselves ill-equiped to meet the challenge of life in the postbellum South. Economically ruined by the war and/or by the plagues and floods that followed in its wake, many Acadians were forced to abandon their traditional agricultural pursuits and to seek their livelihoods as cypress lumberjacks, fishermen, and trappers in the Atchafalaya Basin and in the coastal marshes. Many more were reduced to tenantry by the end of the 19th century. Those drawn into poverty soon discovered that they could not

escape their predicament. They would remain mired in tenantry until the industrialization of Texas's "Golden Triangle" area in the first two decades of the twentieth century provided well-paying jobs to thousands of these people. Throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the tenants' reduced circumstances forced them to interact daily with black fellow tenants--despite mounting pressure for segregation--and the resulting cultural interchanges helped produce both modern Cajun music and Cajun cuisine. Such interchanges also occurred in the Eunice area and helped to blur, at least in the eyes of outside observers, the long-standing cultural cleavages between the Acadians to the south and the prairie Creoles to the north. By the turn of the twentieth century these prairie Creoles, who, like the Acadians, had been abandoned by their ethnic leadership element, gravitated economically and politically toward their southern, French-speaking neighbors, with whom they were increasingly associated by outsiders. Though older prairie Creole residents to this day will readily concede in private that their heritage is distinct from that of the Acadians, they nevertheless have adopted the Cajun label as their own, and, indeed, the traditional prairie Creole settlement was designated Evangeline Parish in 1910.

Poor Creoles east of the Atchafalaya River, and particularly in the Lafourche Basin, also adopted the Cajun identity as they became acculturated through intermarriage. Indeed, the assimilation of the eastern Creoles into the Lafourche Acadian community has been so complete that such families as the Quatrevingts, Chauvins, and Himels

are generally unaware that their German and French ancestors arrived in Louisiana fully one-half century before the Acadians.

As with the lower strata of Acadian society, many members of the up-and-coming antebellum gentry were profoundly affected by the Civil War and its aftermath. The war itself claimed the flower of the caste's manhood, including most of its prominent young politicians. Not until the turn of the century would the Acadian gentry begin to reassert a modicum of its notable antebellum influence on the regional and state levels.

Loss of political influence reflected a corresponding loss of economic power resulting from the ravages of Union invasions, Confederate foraging, vandalism by freedmen, and the post economic slump. Most severely impacted were those planters' children who grew to manhood just before, or during, the conflict. Unable to find a niche in agriculture, many of these young Acadians migrated to South Louisiana's farming villages, such as Vermilionville (present-day Lafayette), Plaquemine, and Thibodaux, where they emerged as a new professional class. Falling back on their classical educations, these urban Cajuns generally enjoyed comfortable existences as factors, attorneys, merchants, clerks, bill collectors and educators.

This movement into the mercantile community held profound social and cultural ramifications for the Acadian upper class; in postbellum Acadiana, as in contemporary New Orleans, the language of business was English, and the Acadian social climbers who had formerly aspired to the social heights of Creole society now moved rapidly into the

Anglo-American mainstream. Because of the social stigma now associated with less affluent Acadians, the Acadian gentry made every effort to disassociate itself from its heritage, initially wrapping itself instead in the ennobling mantle of the Evangeline legend and ultimately identifying itself as simply "American." The children of these acculturated Acadians were in the vanguard of the early twentieth-century movement to Americanize Acadians. Focusing on public education as the best means of bringing the state's illiterate French-speakers into the national mainstream, the movement was propelled by the compulsory education act of 1916 and by the compulsory English educational provisions of the 1921 state constitution. Though the authors of the foregoing laws were Anglos, most of the teachers who implemented the English instructional program were drawn from the Acadian gentry caste. These teachers showed no more sympathy than their Anglo colleagues for Louisiana French, and French-speakers in their care were chastised and publicly humiliated for using their mother tongue on the school grounds.

The frontal assault on Cajun French by the state's educational establishment was complemented by technological, social and economic developments which more effectively undermined the language by discouraging its use at home. The appearance of movies, radio, and other popular new forms of entertainment, all of which were available exclusively in English, encouraged monolingual French Cajuns to become fully bilingual. Meanwhile, Louisiana's burgeoning oil industry, run by English-speaking Texans and Oklahomans, provided unprecedented employment opportunities in Acadiana, but only for those Cajuns with at least a moderate degree of fluency in English. To provide their

children with the opportunity for a better standard of living than they themselves had enjoyed, many working class Cajun parents began to use English exclusively when conversing with their children; this is particularly true of those Cajuns who had experienced the trauma of adapting to the English educational regime.

The threatened demise of the French language jeopardized other cultural institutions including Cajun music, which, in the 1940s, saw the introduction of bluegrass and country music styles and the increasing use of English. In addition, the introduction of mechanization and electrification around World War II obviated the need for both the traditional communal harvest (kept alive by manpower shortages during the Second World War) and the boucherie (communal country butchery) and both virtually disappeared by 1960. These institutions, together with the veillées, or regular, eveningtide visits with neighbors and relatives, had served to periodically renew group bonds. With the rise of television in the late 1950s and early 1960s, however, these visits became less and less frequent and, ultimately, they too passed from the scene.

Few mourned the passing of these activities, for Louisiana's Acadian population had embarked upon a seemingly irreversible march into the American mainstream. The mainstream offered promise of the good life, and those elements of their cultural baggage popularly associated with their heritage were denigrated as archaic, crude ("low class"), or absurd, and because they were associated with memories of poverty and personal humiliation, they were readily discarded. The

very term "Cajun", for example, came, by the late 1950s, to be viewed as the supreme insult to persons of French descent in Acadiana and use of this "epithet" often produced a strongly negative, if not violent, response. Rejection of the past was also manifested in more subtle ways, including naming practices. Children born to Cajun parents between the onset of the Great Depression and the end of the Baby Boom generation were generally christened with given names deemed typically "American"--particularly Anglo or Irish surnames such as Brent, Murphy, and Barry--to facilitate their passage into the promised land.

Survival in the mainstream, however, required a broad range of educational and occupational skills that the blue collar parents themselves could not provide. Having gained an appreciation for education through their participation in CCC camps or during military service during World War II, these parents, like their opposite numbers throughout the nation, stressed education as the key to financial success in the 1950s and '60s. Indeed, young Cajuns were pressured to attend college and the student populations at South Louisiana universities doubled in size during this period. The resulting wave of Cajun college graduates tended to congregate in the college towns, where they came to constitute a notable segment of Acadiana's urban population.

Unlike their counterparts of the preceding century, however, these upwardly mobile, urban Cajuns did not abandon their parent culture entirely. Indeed, like members of other minorities throughout the United States, many urban Cajuns found that their Anglo-Protestant

neighbors simply would not let them forget their past, while as many others became deeply disillusioned with homogenization into the great, rootless American mass. These young urbanites, by the late 1960s, came to resent the very fact that they had been made to feel ashamed of their heritage.

The resulting backlash contributed to the establishment of the Council for the Development of French in Louisiana (CODOFIL) in 1968. Under the leadership of former Congressman Jimmie Domengeaux, CODOFIL articulated this long-suppressed resentment and, in doing so, did much to rehabilitate the Cajuns' self-image. By the early 1970s, placards in businessplaces throughout South Louisiana proclaimed, for the first time since World War II, "on parle français".

Though centered in Lafayette, the self-proclaimed cultural capital of Acadiana and home of the largest urban Cajun community, this ethnic revival was by no means an urban, white collar phenomenon. By the early 1970s, the movement enjoyed the unspoken popular endorsement of blue collar groups which had traditionally been the main guardians of the culture. Their renewed sense of pride and their disdain for those Cajuns who had only recently come out of the closet were brought home quite graphically in the early 1970s when members of this group began to identify themselves as "coonasses"--a term of disputed origin which had replaced "Cajun" as the ultimate local epithet in the 1960s--much to the horror of the "genteel" Acadians. Indeed, in the early 1970s, many blue-collar Cajuns began to sport t-shirts and bumper stickers identifying themselves as "proud coonasses".

Blue-collar Cajun attitudes are particularly significant because of the group's tremendous growth--relative to the other segments of the Cajun population--over the past seventeen years. The rise of this socio-economic group been tied directly to recent developments in the oil industry. Following the oil embargo of 1973, the Louisiana petroleum industry experienced an unprecedented growth spurt. The expansion created a tremendous demand for skilled blue collar workers, particularly welders, pipe fitters, roustabouts, mud engineers, and drillers. Salaries for these positions rose dramatically reflecting the current market conditions, and, because a welder then made approximately twice the salary of a high school principal, thousands of Cajun high school students dropped out of school and entered the work force. Indeed, by 1980, Louisiana led the nation in the number of high school dropouts. Though the short-term benefits of such actions were high, the long-term costs to the Cajun community, and to the state as a whole, were great as well. The current oil depression, which began in December 1985, has left most of the blue collar work force without employment, and the presence of a large reservoir of poorly educated workers has perpetuated Louisiana's long-standing national reputation for backwardness. This image has, in turn, discouraged desirable, non-petroleum related industries from moving into the area and thereby diversifying South Louisiana's economy. Indeed, despite favorable reviews of Lafayette's potential as an "aspiring high-tech mecca" in national computer publications and despite the construction of a high-tech industrial park near the Hub City's northside, the

"silicon bayou" has failed to attract any major high-tech concerns. Faced with bleak prospects of short-term improvement in the local economy and burdened with straitened personal finances, many unemployed Cajuns began, in 1986, to relocate in Tennessee, Georgia, and Florida where jobs were more abundant. (The actual number of emigrants is not presently known, but the outpouring of oil workers was sufficiently large for the local truck rental dealerships [U-Haul, Ryder, etc.] to place a surcharge on vehicles leaving Acadiana.) This exodus, reminiscent of the Cajun migration to the Golden Triangle area earlier this century, will almost certainly result in the wholesale induction of the emigrants into the American mainstream.

But what of those who stayed behind? A vast majority of Louisiana's Cajuns have remained in Acadiana, and like their Acadian immigrant ancestors, they face major challenges to both their culture and their economic way of life. It seems certain that the current depression will provide the coup de grace to at least one element of their culture--Cajun French. Interest in the language, as well as the bilingual programs established to perpetuate it, began to wane sometime around 1980, primarily because of CODOFIL's importation of foreign nationals to teach metropolitan French to Louisiana school children. Because of this apathy, and in some areas open hostility, among the Cajuns themselves, some area school boards began to curtail French classes in the early 1980s, when Acadians's strong economy afforded ample funds for such programs. The current economic crisis has caused further retrenchment, and, without either the necessary support at home

by bilingual parents or popular media programming to sustain it, the language will almost certainly disappear in the early twenty-first century.

Also in a state of flux is the traditional Cajun adherence to the Roman Catholic Church. The Acadians have maintained strong anticlerical tendencies since their colonization in Canada's Maritime Provinces, and these anticlerical biases, coupled with a strong backlash against the post-Vatican II changes in the church, the church's role in integration, and the church's growing impersonalization in the urban areas, have propelled thousands of Cajun Catholics into the myriad fundamentalist churches that have sprung up in Acadiana since 1970. Indeed, these churches have enjoyed a growth rate several times that of the natural increase in the local population.

Other facets of Cajun culture, however, have remained vibrant. Nuclear family cohesiveness remains strong, and the extended family, while not the force that it once was in Acadian society, nevertheless remains the mortar that holds the Cajun community together. Cajun cuisine and Cajun music--the latter on the verge of dissappearing around World War II--are now the subject of national fascination and will undoubtedly endure for some time, if only for economic reasons. The Cajun proclivity for getting the most out of life--a trait grossly distorted by the popular media--remains a necessary counterbalance to their traditional fatalism and the monotony of their long and arduous work-weeks. Cajuns have also maintained not only a strong appreciation

for their natural surroundings, but also a deep seated attachment to their homeland. Though modern economic realities have forced them to surrender their traditional self-sufficiency, they have nevertheless maintained their spirit of independence and irreverence for all forms of authority.

Yet, the Cajuns find themselves at a crossroads: The cultural gap between subregional groups, between urbanites and country folk, and, indeed, between generations, grows wider daily. Though it is consequently difficult to make generalizations, it is certain that Cajun culture, in all its present manifestations, will be more Americanized, at least among the post Baby Boom generations, than at present at the dawn of the twenty-first century. But the degree to which the society will remain an undissolved lump in the American melting pot is contingent upon factors largely beyond their control: the vagaries of the local oil-based economy, the continuing impact of mass communications and improved transportation, and the ongoing national migration to the sunbelt.

DEVELOPMENT OF AN ACADIAN SOCIETY

1604-1755

Carl A. Brasseaux

Having determined the geographical and socio-cultural French origins of Acadian society, one must examine the manner in which this European culture was transplanted and nurtured in North American soil. As elsewhere in North America, European colonists in Acadia quickly molded their culture and society to meet the demands of their surroundings and, in doing so, created a hybrid society, bearing features distinctive of their parent and adopted homelands. By 1671, these colonists consequently considered themselves a distinctive people, a frontier nation; in fact, the Acadians were the first European immigrants to develop a distinct North American identity and mentality. Though English and other French groups would follow in the wake of the Acadian, also becoming "new" peoples, the course of their socio-cultural development was quite different from that of those Frenchmen who found a home along the banks of the Bay of Fundy.

Like their French cousins in the St. Lawrence Valley and their English neighbors in New England, the Acadians were initially overwhelmed by their new environment. In order to survive, the colony's European settlers were forced to acquire new survival skills, thereby changing the face of their colonial society. Because this metamorphosis was a universal phenomenon in North America's early colonial settlements, the Acadian pioneers shared with their opposite numbers in New France and New England the following characteristics:

individualism, adaptability, pragmatism, industriousness, equalitarian principles, and the ability to close ranks in the face of a general threat. The common European heritage and shared frontier experience of the American colonists gave rise to a nationalistic North American identity, a development subsequently repeated in each of the neighboring colonies.

Despite the remarkable parallels in the early evolution of the adjoining European settlements--New England, New France, and Acadia--local environmental factors and the divergent cultural backgrounds of the colonial populations caused the individual outposts to develop quite differently from their neighbors. Acadia's growth was influenced by the colony's geographic isolation, by the chronic neglect of the mother country, and by the peasant background of its settlers. Effectively shielded from the outside world by grography and deprived of cultural contacts and economic support by the motherland's benign neglect, the early Acadians were almost completely isolated in the Maritime Canadian wilderness. In order to survive, the colonists were compelled to adapt quite rapidly to their new surroundings and to exploit local virgin forests and meadows as sources of food, clothing, and shelter. Completely immersed in this environment, the Acadian pioneers developed a frontier mentality.

In the tiny settlements punctuating the Maritime Canadian wilderness, French peasants were transformed, in one generation, into independent and self-sufficient pioneers. The woods and meadows in remote areas of the colony insulated the Acadians from the feudalistic bonds with which the colonists had been shackled in France. In the

frontier's social vacuum, individual talents and industry soon supplanted inherited social position as the measure of a man's worth. The resulting equalitarian spirit, so pervasive in the early Acadian community, coupled with the settlers' common peasant background, encouraged endogamy which, in turn, fostered a common group identity.

Group cohesiveness, coupled with the spirit of independence engendered by unrestricted land ownership (unlike the conditional ownership they had known as peasants) and their tradition of self-sufficiency sustained by the environment and France's neglect of the colony interacted to produce a rapidly maturing colonial mentality. The psychological evolution from French peasant to Acadian yeoman was accelerated by the interruption of cultural ties with the motherland and, over the years, Acadian settlers transposed their characteristically French affinity for their home provinces and their individual farmsteads to their new homeland. This North American identity, based on shared backgrounds and frontier experiences and later reinforced by blood ties, crystallized a century before those of New England and New France.

The circumstances of its birth left a lasting impression upon Acadian society. Flexibility and pragmatism demanded by frontier life permitted the settlers to adapt their survial skills to new environments, but these necessary changes were never permitted to alter fundamentally the colonists' common values and expectations. With rare exceptions, the Acadians were drawn from peasant stock, usually in the Centre-Ouest provinces, and their socio-economic background provided the foundation upon which their colonial society was built. These

former peasants had shared a rather difficult existence in France, where the ravages of the realm's religious wars and rising agricultural levies had produced a precipitous fall in their already low standard of living. A lifetime of oppression by the French aristocracy had made Acadia's peasant-pioneers leary of everyone in position of authority, and these attitudes persisted in the frontier setting. The colony's administrators thus quickly became the objects their fear and loathing. This animosity had traditionally been curbed by the political and economic power weilded in France by the nobility and only in times of extreme distress did the peasantry rise up in protest. In the New World, however, the former peasants not only openly confronted their supervisors, but also did not hesitate to go over their heads to achieve their objectives.

The frontier environment had emboldened Acadia's peasant pioneers. Forced to exist in the woods among the Indians throughout the five years of their indentured servitude to Acadia's early seventeenth century French proprietors, these immigrants had become fiercely independent and their ownership of the lands that were traditionally ceded to them upon the end of their employment--lands over which they exercised full de facto proprietorship--made them subservient to no one.

Land ownership was the key to the settlers' modest social and economic asperations. The former peasants, products of a pre-capitalistic environment, sought neither prestige nor affluence through land acquisition, but rather economic independence and a comfortable existence patterned upon their pre-colonial, agrarian way

of life. Preservation of their traditional life style was also an economic necessity, for France's neglect of Acadia forced the colonists to be self-sufficient to survive.

Self-sufficiency in this strange world demanded industry, flexibility, pragmatism, thrift and the ability to identify one's personal interests with those of the larger community. Large co-operative labor pools were absolutely crucial to the nascent colony's survival. Ice Age glaciation had pushed all of the peninsula's topsoil in the Bay of Fundy Basin. In order to engage in agriculture, the Acadian pioneers had to reclaim and develop the fertile coastal marshes from a treacherous body of water that possessed the world's strongest tidal action. Construction of the dykes and drainage equipment demanded intensive effort by large groups of workers. The peasant tradition of communal harvests, undergirded by the large extended family networks carried intact to the New World from Poitou and the Centre Quest, facilitated organization of these critical labor pools.

The melding of traditional peasant values with the changes in life style demanded by the harsh North American environment produced a distinctive society. The physical environment, however, was not the only stimulus for change in the remote colony. Local political, economic, and sociological factors were also instrumental in changing the character of early Acadian society. Particularly significant was the colony's volatile political environment. Between 1604 and 1710, Acadia would change hands ten times, falling sporadically under French and English control. During the first century of its existence, the

colony was also invaded by pirates and wracked by civil warfare between its rival fur trading interests.

The seeds of Acadia's political instability were sown by its first colonial administration. Acadia was established in 1604 as a proprietory colony by Pierre Duguay, sieur de Monte, who, in 1603, had acquired a ten-year trade monopoly over the area.(1) First settled on barren Ste. Croix (present-day Dorchet) Island, off the Maine coast, De Mont's colony nearly perished from scurvy during its first American winter and subsequently relocated at Port Royal (present-day Annapolis Royal). The surviving colonists erected a small fortress and established commercial relations with the local Micmac Indians.(2) A thriving fur trade soon developed, but the colony collapsed in 1607 when De Monts discovered that his monopoly had been revoked. With the exception of Champlain and a few adventurers who would establish Quebec the following year, most of De Mont's colonists returned to France in 1607.

In 1670, Jean de Biencourt de Poutrincourt, the former governor of Acadia during the De Monts proprietorship, reoccupied Port Royal and planted there a colony of twenty-five fur trappers.(3) Poutrincourt and his son and successor, Charles de Biencourt de St. Just, laid the foundation for a permanent colony. The fur trade was reestablished, crops were sown, and land grants were issued.

Yet, the colony's survival remained doubtful for many years. In 1613, Samuel Argall, a Virginia pirate, destroyed Port Royal. This blow, coupled with Biencourt de St. Just's death in 1623, so demoralized the colony that most of the fur trapper/colonists adopted a

nomadic life in the interior. The feeble French colony thus made no effort to block an invasion by Scottish Calvinists, who occupied Port Royal in 1628-29.

The trappers nevertheless maintained by their continuing presence in Acadia French claims to the territory and, in 1632, the French government, acting through the Company of New France, sough to build a more permanent base in the colony. Colonists were recruited and dispatched to the colony. In July 1632, 300 Frenchmen arrived at the mouth of the La Heve River, organized themselves into military units, marched across the peninsula, and the following September, seized Port Royal.

Having expelled the small Scottish colony from Acadia, the French immigrants looked forward to an era of stability and economic growth, but factional strife soon erupted between the immigrants and established trappers who feuded over disputed possession of the region's prime fur trapping areas. Between 1635 and 1650, parties of rival fur traders frequently engaged in "skirmishes, blockades, fort-storming, and the capture and recapture of (trading) posts."(4) Only when the leader of the Company faction--Charles Menou d' Aulney--entered into a mariage de convenance with the widow of his rival did the fighting cease.

The French colony, however, was unable to reap the benefits of peace, for in 1654, English forces seized Port Royal, and Acadia remained a British possession for the next sixteen years. The British occupation of Acadia forced the colonists to think and act in their own interests independently of French authorities. When the French

returned to Acadia in 1670, they discovered, much to their dismay, that the former peasants now demonstrated no hesitancy whatsoever in protesting to higher authorities in Quebec the actions of their civil administrators and Catholic clergy. In addition, the colonists had discovered that they could use effectively against bureaucrats the same techniques that they had used in France to protect their interests against avaricious noblemen, specifically utilizing procrastination, subterfuge, and other forms of passive resistance to foil or disrupt unpopular policies.

Opposition to a common foe helped to reinforce group bonds already reinforced by blood ties. At least thirteen of the sixty-seven families listed in the 1671 census of Acadia were related by marriage, and recent research by French scholars has demonstrated that several other families were thus united before departing France for the New World. This tightly knit group soon absorbed through marriage Frenchmen from other provinces. As the years progressed, the entire community thus became rapidly interrelated and thus comprised a clan.

Though intermarriage helped to preserve the core values of the initial immigrants, local environmental factors and the circumstances of their arrival nevertheless forced the Acadian community to make some cultural concessions. As indentured servants to the Company of New France, French immigrants to Acadia were obligated to spend five years trapping among the Micmac Indians. To survive, they were compelled to adopt the semi-nomadic life and seasonal economic pursuits of their Indian hosts. Following the end of their engagement, the former trappers incorporated some Indian pursuits into the seasonal tempo of

their agrarian life style. Many Acadians, for example, continued to hunt moose in winter, to gather shellfish during the spring, and to dish in coastal waters during the summer.

Mastering this diversity of economic pursuits was absolutely indispensable for survival on the Acadian frontier because of the colony's isolation. Acadia lay far from the now well established sealanes to North America, those to Quebec and Boston. Overland travel to these trade centers was also impractical because of the distance, the rugged terrain, and the many portages involved. A one-way trip to Quebec, for example, required twelve full days of intensive, back-breaking effort. The obvious alternative was to attract foreign merchants to Acadia's shores, but the colony had little to offer in trade. Not until the mid-seventeenth century would New England smugglers find Acadian commerce sufficiently enticing to sail to this colonial backwater.

Lacking the natural resources and manufactured goods necessary to attract significant numbers of merchant vessels in the mid and late seventeenth century, the Acadian population was compelled to support itself. And, to support itself, the colony's growing population required new, arable lands. By the mid-seventeenth century, most of the arable lands around Port Royal had been occupied and developed. The married children of these pioneers were thus forced to establish themselves and their families elsewhere. Following the restoration of French rule in 1670, adventurous young Acadians ventured into the undeveloped areas along the Bay of Fundy, settling first at Grand Pré and Pisiquid, then at Beaubassin and, finally, at Chepoudy. After

establishing themselves, these bachelors usually returned home temporarily to Port Royal to seek wives. While in the colonial capital, these pioneers often persuaded relatives to accompany them to the developing outposts. The residents of these nascent outposts, initially composed of five-to-ten interrelated family units, were, and would remain clannish, for later immigrants consistenly married into the more established families. Consequently, the Acadians, according to one preeminent Acadian historian, came to compose, by 1700, "a clan, a body of people united by blood ties, common beliefs and common aims for the group as a whole. . ."(5)

The strengthening of social bonds within the community permitted the Acadians to weather internal disputes generated by overlapping land boundaries. During the Company of New France proprietorship of the early seventeenth century (1632-1654), much of Acadia was partitioned among fifty-six Company investors and leading settlers. Most of these concessionaires, or seigneurs as they are sometimes called, were initially in no hurry to develop their properties, but England's seizure of Acadia in 1654 revealed the tenuousness of their claims to these lands. Consequently, following the restoration of French dominion over Acadia in 1670, the seigneurs scrambled to make their lands productive and, in turn, have them generate revenues. To accomplish this goal, the Acadian seigneurs generally relied upon French precedents and attempted to populate their lands with peasants. Engagés at the end of their five-year stint as trappers for the Company were actively recruited by the seigneurs who, through ignorance of their often poorly defined land boundries, issued overlapping

concessions. From the mid-1670's until the Acadian deportation of 1755, the colonial court dockets would be consistently filled with boundary disputes, but there were no armed confrontations between settlers as there had been during the Company proprietorship. The embryonic Acadian society was thus intact when the colony was again seized--this time permanently--by English forces in 1710.(6)

Acadia became a permanent British possession through the Treaty of Utrecht of 1713. The treaty permitted the Acadians to leave the colony within one year and to transport their moveable property to "any other place they shall think fit. . . " Those remaining in the colony (now called Nova Scotia by the English) under British rule, however, were guaranteed freedom of religion and, under the terms of Queen Anne's proclamation of June 23, 1713, full title to their moveable and immoveable properties.(7)

Refusing to submit to English rule, many young Acadians migrated from Port Royal to the remote settlements of Beaubassin and Chepody (see Map I) which, while actually on the Nova Scotia peninsula, were deemed to be in French territory because of the ambiguously worded Treaty of Utecht boundary provisions. The vast majority of the Acadian colonists, however, preferred to remain on their farms and endure British rule. Their decision was based on three factors: First, with the change in domination, their lands became fully their own property. The seigneurs had formerly maintained tenuous claims of ownership reminiscent of the "degree" of ownership maintained by the French nobility in peasant lands (see the "French Origins" section). Land was sacred to these former French peasants--the only permanent form of

wealth, and they were not about to turn their backs on the commodity their family had vainly worked for generations to attain in the metropole. Second, the colony had changed hands ten times between its establishment and 1713, and the Acadians felt certain that it was only a matter of time before the French returned to govern Acadia. Finally, the region's prime farmland lay under the salt marches along the Bay of Fundy's eastern and northern littorals, and reclamation projects were not only of long duration but exceedingly arduous as well.(8)

The Acadians, however, were unwilling to remain unconditionally. Though their relations with the local Micmac had been traditionally amicable, the tribe, whose number equalled those of the Acadians themselves, was firmly allied to the French and would, the Acadians believed, be mobilized against the Bay of Fundy settlements in the event of a Franco-British war. (As events would later prove, these fears were not entirely without foundation.) The Acadians remaining in Nova Scotia consequently refused to swear allegiance to Britian when it was proffered by the colonial administration in 1713. Indeed, between 1713 and 1717, in confrontations reminiscent of those between French <u>seigneurs</u> and peasants, the Acadians procrastinated in considering the terms under which they would remain under British rule. This delay permitted the Acadians to ascertain the weaknesses of the British colonial regime, which, with its 500-man garrison, was almost entirely dependent upon the Acadian population for its supplies. Thus dealing from a position of relative strength when finally condescending to open negotiations with the colonial regime, the Acadians sought to wring significant concessions from their new

rulers: freedom of religion, recognition of their culture's right to exist, and guaranteed civilian neutrality in wartime.(9)

The last demand placed the Acadian population squarely at odds with the colonial government. Governor Richard Philipps was under orders to extract an unconditional oath of allegiance from His Britannic Majesty's reluctant Nova Scotian subjects, but he lacked the necessary military force to intimidate the Acadians into submission. He therefore deferred judgment on the matter. In fact, despairing of ever achieving a solution to the thorny Acadian problem he abruptly departed Nova Scotia for England in 1723.(10)

As a result of Philipps' departure and of a Micmac uprising in Nova Scotia, the question of Acadian loyalty, and thus continued Acadian occupation of the Bay of Fundy settlements, lay dormant until the summer of 1726, when Lieutenant Governor Lawrence Armstrong, Philipp's surrogate, demanded an unconditional oath of allegiance from the Francophone population. Armstrong's action precipitated a second, small-scale exodus of the established Acadian population from Nova Scotia. But, once again, the vast majority of Acadians remained in their homeland. Once more, the French settlers of Nova Scotia adamantly rejected the unconditional oath and responded with a counterproposal including guarantees of Acadian neutrality, property rights, and freedom of religion. To extract these from Armstrong's representatives, the residents of several Acadian districts regaled the visiting English officials and the latter, once properly inebriated, became quite amenable to altering the terms of the oath to suit the needs of their hosts. It goes without saying that such alterations

were universally rejected by the colonial regime.(11)

The resulting diplomatic impasse elicited Philipps' return to Annapolis-Royal (formerly Port Royal), Nova Scotia in 1729, and, in the ensuing months, the colony's chief executive achieved through chicanery the success that had proved so elusive for twenty years. In negotiating with the Acadian representatives, Phillips assured the reluctant British subjects that the British government had approved their demand for neutrality during Franco-British hostilities. On the basis of these verbal assurances, the Acadians took the unconditional oath, and armed with these signatures, Philipps sailed to England. In presenting the oath of allegiance to the Board od Trade, however, Philipps, who was under intense pressure from his superiors, notified the Lords of Trade that his mission had been an unqualified success and that the Acadians had abandoned their long-standing claim of neutrality. Through this artifice, the so-called "conventions of 1730," Philipps managed to simultaneousluy please and deceive all parties involved in the escalating controversy over the unconditional oath of allegiance, thereby laying the groundwork for future Anglo-Acadian confrontations. But, in 1731, both parties believed that the dispute had been settled to their satisfaction; tensions eased; and life returned to normal.(12)

The Acadians quickly adjusted to the new political realities within the colony. Although the absence of military support effectively restricted the colonial government's sphere of control to efforts, between 1730 and 1749, to control the Acadian population. For example, Nova Scotia's governors regularly rejected requests from

Annapolis River Valley residents to relocate along the Bay of Fundy's northern littoral, where British authority was non-existent. The governors also went through the notions of regulating the residents of the outlying posts, but, despite the presence of a small garrison at Mines, their missives generally fell upon deaf ears.(13)

English rule thus meant little, if any, change in the daily lives of the Acadians and, in practice, the French-speaking population continued to "regulate a considerable amount of their day-to-day affairs themselves." Furthermore, the Acadians consistently viewed the English colonial government as an instrument to serve their collective needs, particularly in the areas of judicial and notarial services, and not as a regulatory, or administrative agency. Thus, when the governor at Port Royal, or his representative at Mines (a notary usually of Acadian descent), placed demands upon the French-speaking population (or "French Neutrals" as they had now come to be known), requiring the latter to survey lands, build roads, quarter troops, or to furnish firewood and provisions to the garrison, the colonists quickly joined ranks to oppose the levies. Through procrastination or the arguments of their representatives, the Acadians often foiled these governemtal programs. This is particularly true of the English governors' repeated efforts to survey their landholdings or to appropriate locally produced meat and grain for the colonial garrison. The Acadians, speaking through their popularly elected representatives, managed to delay surveys and to reduce the agricultural levies through the pretext of poor harvests while simulteneously smuggling their surplus grain and cattle to either the French fortress of Louisbourg on nearby île Royale

(present-day Cape Breton Island) or to the smugglers' den at Baie Verte, maintained by Boston merchants. Thus, while the English garrison at Annapolis-Royal lived under the specter of famine, the French Neutrals obtained much needed specie and manufactured goods--both of which were chonically scare in early eighteenth-century Nova Scotia--to satisfy their own needs.(14)

The Acadians frontier independence and peasant heritage--both manifested in their smuggling activities--earned them the undying scorn of their British colinial administrators. Writing in late 1732,for example, Lieutenant Governor Armstrong, no longer able to tolerate the "insubordination" of his Acadian charges, loudly lamenated his fate, noting that the colonies "behaved themselves in most respects as independent of any Government" and "treated with so much contempt" the English authorities who "presumed" to rule over them. While thumbing their noses at their English overlords at every opportunity, the Acadians nevertheless carefully avoided any direct challenge to the British regime which would inevitably have embroiled them in a military confrontation. The overwhelming majority of Acadians consequently observed the "conventions of 1730" during the War of the Austrian Succession (1744-1748), maintaining strict neutrality even when French and Indian invaders attempted to incite them to insurrection in February 1747.(15)

The parity of British and French military might in the Nova Scotia region, upon which Acadian neutrality was actually based, disappeared following the conclusion of the War of the Austrian Sucession in 1748. After the cessation of hostilities, England and French engaged in a

"cold war" to bring Nova Scotia securely into their sphere of influence. But the establishment of the fortified port of Halifax in 1749 tipped the balance of power decidely in favor of Britain despite construction of French military installations along the Nova Scotia's western border (the Chignecto Peninsula) in 1750. The Acadians failed to perceive the gravity of the escalating intercolonial tensions, and maintained their traditional neutral stance toward the belligerents.(16)

Neutrality became not only increasingly dangerous. Acting in cooperation with the French Governor of Louisbourg, Abbé Louis Joseph de Le Loutre, a French Catholic missionary who had worked among Micmac Indians since 1738, attempted to force the Beaubassin in 1750 by French-allied Indians and the resulting defection of between 2,000 and 4,000 French Neutrals into French-held territory prompted reciprocal, albeit peaceful measures by Nova Scotian officials to maintain control over the Acadian population.(17)

In 1750, in response to the Micmac attack upon Beaubassin and the resulting out migration of Acadians into French-held territory, Governor Edward Cornwallis of Nova Scotia revived the long dormant issue of an Acadian oath of allegiance to Britian. In addition, he proposed to the British Board of Trade various measures for controlling and ultimately assimilating the colony's now large French-speaking population. The Acadians, however, refused the unconditional oath proffered by Cornwallis and demanded instead the right to renew the phantom neutrality clause of the "conventions of 1730." When Cornwallis then rejected the existing agreement as "illegal and

unacceptable," 2,000-4,000 Acadians secured Britiish passports for the French-held Shediak Peninsula and île St. Jean (present-day Prince Edward Island), abandoned their family farms, and fled the specter of English regulation of their lives.(18)

The issuance of passports to the diagruntled Acadians by Cornwallis represents an important departure in English policy toward Nova Scotia's large French Neutral population. Prior to the founding of Halifax, the presence of a stable, agrarian, Acadian population was initally important to the security of the poorly supplied British garrison. Thus, in the absence of a real French military threat to the colonial borders, Acadian recalcitrance regarding an unconditional oath of allegiance could be, and was viewed by colonial officials as a mere annoyance which did not jeopardize England's tenuous military position in the area. With the establishment of Halifax, however, the Acadians were no longer a vital cog in the garrison's chain of supply, and with the outset of French-inspired Indian raids on the border settlements in 1750, Nova Scotian officials ignored the Acadians' recent demonstration of pro-French sympathy.(19)

The Acadians failed to perceive this significant shift in British policy. Moreover, following Cornwallis' departure in 1752, the Acadians were lulled into complacancy by the tranquil, but brief administration (1752-1753) of Peregrin Hopson, a conciliator by temperament who attempted to heal the rift between the colonial government and the French Neutral population. Hopson's appeasement policies deluded the Acadian into believing that there had been no real change in English policy since 1749, particularly as Cornwallis and his

succesor had abandoned the quest for a reaffirmation of Acadian loyalty to Britain in the face of stubborn Acadian resistance. The French Neutrals thus anticipated the reestablishment of their advantageous relationship with the colonial government, in which the Acadian could be co-operative only when they wished to be. Life under English rule was considered preferable to French domination, for many Acadian refugees complained bitterly to relatives of the oppression they encountered at Cape Breton Island and île St. Jean. Moreover, despite England's efforts to expand its colonial war machine through large-scale colonization at Halifax and subsequent attempts to establish German Protestants at Lunenburg, the French Neutrals viewed the Anglo-French struggle for the area as being in a stalemate, and, when Hopson was compelled by failing health to return to Enland in 1753, "the Acadians had no reason to suspect a radical alteration of their lives." Their unwarranted optimism would soon have tragic results.(20)

SYNOPSIS

In pre-dispersal Acadie, the transplanted French peasants developed a unique North American culture that reflected both their European roots and their New World environment. For example, they remained as frugal, industrious, and earthy as they had formerly been in the motherland, but were also more independent and, in the words of one of their colonial administrators, "insolent" than their contemporary counterparts were permitted to be in France. The Acadian pioneers still adhered to the seasonal economic cycle established eons before by their French ancestors, but their seasonal pursuits were now often those learned at the hands of the local Indians.

Acadian cultural development was accelerated by the colony's geographic isolation, the chronic of the mother country, and the frequent change of domination. The Acadians thus became self-reliant of necessity, and this self-reliance in turn fostered a new group identity. By 1671, most Acadians no longer considered themselves French, but "Acadian."

Yet, the English, who assumed permanent control of the colony in 1713, failed to perceive this significant development. The Acadian refusal to take an unconditional oath of allegiance to England, which would have exposed the colonists to attacks by the French-allied Micmac, was interpreted as evidence of their lingering affinity for the French. For nearly half a century the English continued to view the Acadians as "French", and thus as a potential fifth-column in the event

of any Anglo-French military confrontation. Anglo concern about the perceived Acadian threat to the colony's internal security grew as Anglo-French tensions escalated along Nova Scotia's western border after 1748 and led inevitably to the Acadian diaspora of 1755.

NOTES

1. Edme Rameau de St-Pere, Une Colonie feodale, I, 20-21, 39; Lauvriere, Tragedie d'un peuple, I, 10.

2. Rameau de St-Pere, Une Colonie feodale, I, 21-25; Lauvriere, Tragedie d'un peuple, I, 10-24.

3. Rameau de St-Pere, Une Colonie feodale, I, 44, 49.

4. Clark, Acadia, P. 92.

5. Griffiths, Creation of a People, p. 18.

6. Clark, Acadia, p. 113, 121, 238; Rameau de St-Pere, Une Colonie feodale, I, 46, 181-96; Brebner, New England's Outpost, pp. 239-40.

7. Griffiths, Creation of a People, p. 20.

8. Ibid, pp. 21, 23, 26; Brebner, New England's Outpost, p. 76.

9. David E. Henige, comp., Colonial Governors from the Fifteenth Century to the Present (Madison, Wis., 1970), p. 155; Rameau de St-Pere, Une Colonie feodale, II, 10.

10. Rameau de St-Pere, Une Colonie feodale, I, 14; Brebner, New England's Outpost, p. 80.

11. Rameau de St-Pere, Une Colonie feodale, II, 38-39, 44-45.

12. Ibid, II, 50, 52-53, 61; Lauvriere, Tragedie, I, 250; Griffiths, Creation of a People, p. 27.

13. Rameau de St-Pere, Une Colonie feodale, II, 63-65; Griffiths, Creation of a People, pp. 21-22, 32.

14. Griffiths, Creation of a People, 21-22; Brebner, New England's Outpost, pp. 38, 50, 61, 67, 147-149, 152-154, 162-164; Thomas B. Akins, ed., Acadia and Nova Scotia: Documents Relating to the Acadian French and the First British Colonization of the Province, 1714-1758 (1889; reprint edition, Cottonport, LA.: Polyanthos, 1972), p. 89-91, 99-100, 152; Lauvriere, Tragedie, I, 190, 213, 220, 221, 226-228, 256, 263; Clark, Acadia, pp. 189-190, 230-231, 248-258.

15. Akins, ed., Acadia and Nova Scotia, pp. 89, 91, 99, 100, 141-163; Griffiths, Creation of a People, p. 9, 44-49; Clark, Acadia, pp. 176, 183-184; Lauvriere, Tragedie, I, 256; Rameau de St-Pere, Une Colonie feodale, I, 118-131; Brebner, New England's Outpost, pp. 115-119; Edouard Richard, Acadia: Missing Links of a Lost Chapter in American History, 2 vols. (New York, 1895), I, 201-216.

16. Clark, Acadia, pp. 221, 331, 334-339, 349, 350, 364; Brebner, New ENgland's Outpost, pp. 15-117; Akins, ed., Acadia and Nova Scotia, pp. 250-300; Griffiths, Creation of a People, pp. 42-43.

17. Griffiths, Creation of a People, pp. 42-44; Rameau de St-Pere, Une Colonie feodale, II, 147-148.

18. Brebner, New England's Outpost, p. 166, 179-180; Richard, Acadia, I, 236-247; Rameau de St-Pere, Une Colonie feodale, I, 141.

19. Richard, Acadia, I, 235.

20. Brebner, New England's Outpost, p. 175-176, 188, 189; Griffiths, Creation of a People, pp. 45, 48-49.

THE ACADIAN DIASPORA

Carl A. Brasseaux

-I-

Impact of the Grand Dérangement

The dispersal of the Acadian population--perhaps better known by the historical term Grand Dérangement--is unquestionably the most traumatic event in Acadian history. Longfellow atttempted to portray the tragic consequences of the deportation of the Acadian population from the Fundy Basin through his epic Evangeline, but the narrow focus of this work failed to convey the magnitude of the disruption and misery upon the Acadian population. To fully comprehend the impact of this event upon the Acadian community, one need merely examine its demographic repercussions. There are presently, by the most liberal estimates, 1,150,000 Acadians scattered about two continents; the actual figure, however, is probably closer to 500,000, for figures in Louisiana and the Canadian Maritimes have been grossly inflated in recent years for political reasons. Had the Grand Dérangement never taken place, Canadian demographic experts predicted in the late 1970s, the present Acadian community would number nearly 23,000,000, if the pre-dispersal population growth rate had remained constant over the next two centuries.(1)

-II-

The Grand Dérangement

By unswerving adherence to the "conventions of 1730," the Acadians in 1750 had foiled a British effort to undermine their semiautonomous

position in the colony. Unqualified subservience to the British colonial regime, many contemporary British observers and many students of the Acadian diaspora agree--was the first step in an evolving British plan for assimilating the potentially subversive, French-speaking Catholics into the Anglo-Protestant mainstream of the British empire. This eventuality was well understood by the Acadian leadership. Thus, though their struggle against the colonial regime was couched in political terms, the Acadians were actually fighting for their cultural survival. The Acadians were given a brief reprieve during the administration of the conciliatory Peregrine Hopson, but the growing border tensions between the French and English North American empires embroiled them once again in a power struggle with the government, now centered in Halifax.(2)

Suspicious of Acadian motives and no longer dependent upon the good graces of the French-speaking community for its survival, the ruling English oligarchy was now resolved to settle the festering Acadian problem once and for all. The fate of the Acadian population lay with the Nova Scotian governor and colonial charter. The chief executive, however, played a pivotal role in shaping the British response to the recently resurrected Acadian problem. In 1754, Major Charles Lawrence succeeded Hopson as governor of Nova Scotia. A professional soldier who had most recently served on Nova Scotia's western border strengthening the colony's defense against the growing French military threat, Lawrence was preoccupied with the vulnerability of the colony he now commanded. And, in Lawrence's mind, the internal threat posed by the Acadians was quite as formidable as that posed by the French

fortresses that now occupied strategic points on the colony's flanks. The colonial defense demanded that Nova Scotia mobilize all of its resources, a task virtually impossible in the face of the at least passive (and possibly active) resistance of the colony's large Acadian majority. Thus, like Cornwallis, Lawrence was most anxious to secure an unqualified oath of allegiance from the Acadians, but, unlike his predecessor, Lawrence would brook absolutely no opposition.(3)

The Acadians, on the other hand, saw no reason to alter their traditional demand for neutrality. And, as their population, which now numbered between 12,000 and 18,000 individuals (exact figures are unavailable because the last comprehensive, pre-dispersal census was taken in 1714), easily dwarfed its English counterpart, despite the establishment of Halifax, the French-speakers did not feel intimidated. Failing to perceive the growing desperation of Lawrence and other key members of the British colonial administration, the Acadians exhibited no interest whatsoever in voluntarily linking their destinies with those of the British empire. In 1750, the Acadians had witnessed with horror the firy destruction of the Beaubassin district by the Micmac Indians and the increasing belligerence of the French forces along Nova Scotia's borders augured ill for anyone in the British camp.

Table I

ACADIAN POPULATION GROWTH, 1654-1755

Year	Total
1654	300-350
1701	1450
1737	7598
1755	12000-18000 (4)

The Acadian problem, as always, held the promise of long duration, especially as Lawrence lacked the means and a legal motive for driving from Nova Scotia thousand of French-speakers who, by virtue of the "conventions of 1730", were at least nominally British subjects. Nevertheless, as early as November 1754, Lawrence conspired with Massachusetts Governor William Shirley, commander-in-chief of British forces in New England and an outspoken proponent of English colonial supremacy in North America, for the unauthorized deportation of Acadians from Nova Scotia. False rumors (possibly initiated by Lawrence and Shirley or their agents) provided the conspirators with a pretext for massing British troops in Nova Scotia. In late spring 1755, 1,800 British soldiers from New England sailed to the Isthmus of Chignecto. Meanwhile, Lawrence coerced the Acadians into surrendering their firearms. Now largely defenseless, the Acadians became easy prey for the pro-deportation administrators, particularly following the British capture of French Fort Beausejour in June, 1755 which sealed off the only overland escape, the Acadians were completely at the mercy of their British overlords.(5)

Lawrence was quick to exploit this advantage. In late June, 1755, Lawrence ordered all of the Acadian settlements in Nova Scotia to send delegates to the colonial capital under the pretext of discussing the possible return of the confiscated Acadian firearms. When the delegation representing the Mines area--the most thickly populated Acadian settlements in the Bay of Fundy Basin appeared before the governor on July 3, however, Lawrence demanded that they accept, on behalf of their constituents, an unconditional oath of allegiance to Britian. The Acadian delegates stubbornly refused to concede their neutral status and consequently were summarily imprisoned to serve as an example to their equally recalcitrant constituents.

The refusal of the Mines delegation to cave in to Lawrence's demand created a crisis of authority within the colony, a crisis exacerbated by the arrival on July 23 of reports of General Edward Braddock's humiliating defeat by a motley French and Indian force in the middle Atlantic colonies. From the perspective of the British colonial administration, another colonial war was imminent, and Nova Scotia's French-speaking population, through its rejection of the foregoing oath, was telegraphing its intention to become a francophile fifth column. Thus, following Lawrence's lead, the colonial council, which had recently ordered all Acadians in Nova Scotia to take an unconditional oath of allegiance, on July 31 ordered the forcible removal of the colony's large Acadian population.(6)

To effect the removal as expeditiously and as cheaply as possible, Lawrence devised a diabolically clever scheme for assuring the Acadians' peaceable submission to deportation. Drawing upon engineer

Charles Morris' hitherto neglected memorandum on Acadian deportation, Charles Lawrence directed the English commandants at Beaubassin, Pisiquid, and Annapolis-Royal to lure the local Acadian males into their respective ports. There, the unsuspecting victims would be arrested and detained until the arrival of transports which would carry them into exile. The detention of male hostages would ensure that the local women and children would remain home with their possessions and livestock, thus expediting their removal from the colony. Finally, all Acadian property would be confiscated to reimburse the English government for the cost of their removal, while all Acadian homes abd boats would be destroyed.(7)

This plan was executed with ruthless precision by the British commanders in the Beaubassin and Pisiquid/Mines areas. At Fort Cumberland (formerly French Fort Beausejour at Beaubassin) on August 9, 1755, Colonel Robert Monckton's force captured 250 to 400 local Acadians summoned to the post ostensibly for an important gubernatorial decree regarding their lands. The effective use of subterfuge and the element of suprise also permitted the British military to arrest and detain 418 Acadian men and teenagers at the Grand Pré church on September 5. In both communities, the wives and children of the detainees were notified of the loved ones' arrest and ordered to prepare for their imminent deportation from their home district. On the day appointed for their removal--usually five days after the detention of the local Acadian men--the deportees were divided into

groups by age and by sex and then were marched to the nearby landings. There, they were placed in longboats amd distributed among waiting British merchant vessels anchored in the Bay of Fundy.(8)

The settlements adjoining Grand Pré and its dependencies were demoralized by the removal of the Grand Pré settlers and were intimidated by the presence of large British military patrols in their area. These settlements consequently offered no resistance to subsequent eradication efforts. By mid-October, 1755, most of the Acadians had been forcibly removed from the heavily populated Minas Basin area of Nova Scotia.(9)

Winslow's efficiency in uprooting the Grand Pré and Beaubassin Acadians contrasts sharply with the incompetence of Major John Handfield, sent by Lawrence to eradicate the Acadian population in the Annapolis-Royal area. Apparently unable to lie convincingly, Handfield was unable to lure the local Acadian males into a snare similar to those of Beaubassin and Grand Pré. Indeed, suspecting a trap, all of the local Acadians fled into the woods, where they remained in hiding for several weeks. The onset of the Canadian winter, however, forced the refugees to surrender in early November and, by early December, 1755, 1,664 Acadian residents of the former colonial capital and its environs had boarded British transport vessels.(10)

The Acadians taken prison at Annapolis-Royal, Grand Pré and its environs, and Beaubassin numbered approximately 5,400 individuals. Deportations continued an a smaller scale in succeeding years, and by 1760, according to Andrew Hill Clark, approximately 6,000 Acadians had been sent into exile.

Table II

Acadians Deportees, 1755-1760 (11)

District	Number
Grand Pré	2182
Annapolis	1664
Pisiquid	1100 (approximately)
Beaubassin	1100 (approximately)
Total	6050 (approximately)

Table III

Distribution of Acadian Exiles, 1755

Colony	Number
Georgia	400
S. Carolina	942
N. Carolina	50
Virginia	1500
Maryland	913
Pennsylvania	454
New York	344
Connecticut	731
Massachusetts	735
Bound for N.C. but escaped	232
Total	6301

These Acadians were distributed among the British seaboard colonies--from Georgia to Massachusetts--and England. Those deemed the most dangerous Acadians--those who had previously been French conscripts at Fort Beausejour--were sent to those seaboard provinces farthest from their native land, while the farmers of Pisiquid, Grand Pré and Annapolis-Royal were widely distributed throuhout the lower thirteen colonies.

Table IV

Acadians in Exile, 1763 (12)

Massachusetts	1043
Connecticut	666
New York	249
Maryland	810
Pennsylvania	383
S. Carolina	280
Georgia	185
Nova Scotia	1249
St. John River	87
England	866
France	3400
Quebec	2000
Prince Edward Is.	300
Baie Des Chaleurs	700
Total	12218

Acadians in Exile

Crammed into the dark, dank holes of their small British transports, given substandard food and water, and denied knowledge of their destination, the Acadian deportees were a miserable lot indeed. As the Acadians exiled to Pennsylvania would subsequently recall: "we were so crowded on the transport vessels, that we had not room even for all our bodies to lay down at once, and consequently were prevented from carrying with us proper necessities." The detrimental effects of overcrowding--most of the British transports carried approximately one-third more passengers than they were designed to hold--and poor diet together had devastating effects upon the formerly robust health of the exiles. The general decline in the exiles' state of physical wellbeing was exacerbated by the detrimental effects of stress and seasickness produced by the storms and heavy seas that plagued the crossing. It is thus hardly surprising that, almost without exception, epidemics (usually typhus and smallpox) broke out aboard among the exiles either during the crossing or upon their arrival at an English colonial seaport.(13)

These epidemics did little to ingratiate the exiles with their reluctant hosts. The Acadian exiles arrived unannounced at the colonial seaports designated as their destinations by Charles Lawrence, and the stunned colonial officials in these "host" communities were understandably wary of their destitute and decidedly hostile Acadian charges. For months before the first exiles appeared in their harbors, the local newspapers had been filled with anti-French propaganda, much of which was directed specifically against Nova Scotia's Acadian

population. The Acadians--whose numbers were inflated to 30,000 by British propagandists--were depicted as immoral "papists" who occupied the best farmland on the northern Atlantic coastline, land that God has clearly intended for proper English Protestants. Though nominally British subjects, these papists were fully expected to join their co-religionists, the French, and their fierce Indian allies the impending intercolonial struggle for North American domination. As the French were then threatening British frontier positions all along the Appalachian Mountain range, the Acadians, in the view of the British colonial administrators, would constitute, even in exile, a formidable fifth column, capable perhaps of inciting servile insurrections in the slave colonies to aid the French cause. The long-term threat to internal security posed by the Acadians was, of course, immediately overshadowed by the threat of infection that they posed to the established colonial populations and the financial burden which their resettlement would entail.(14)

Virginia

Unwilling to be saddled with these myriad problems, Virginia flatly refused to accept the 1,500 Acadian exiles entrusted to its care. These Acadians were summarily dispatched (at Virginia's expense) to England, where they remained in coastal detention centers for the duration of the Seven Years War.

Georgia and South Carolina

The Old Dominion's southern neighbors were equally inhospitable. The governor of Georgia, John Reynolds, rejected his colony's allotment of human cargo when the first transport cast anchor off Savannah in early December, 1755. Indeed, before leaving for a series of meetings with Southeastern Indians, Reynolds forbade the colony's chief pilot "at his peril to bring any more such people into the Province." The governor's orders, however, were ignored and nearly 400 exiles were deposited on Georgia's shores. Because of the circumstances of their arrival, the destitute Acadians were generally ignored by the colonial government for the first year of their exile in the former penal colony. In fact, only when they petitioned the colonial government for emergency assistance in January 1756 were they recognized at all, and then only to the extent that those exiles too ill to support themselves were given a week's supply of rice.

The government's benign negligence of the Georgia Acadians provided them the independence to coordinate their escape from the southernmost British seaboard colony, and, by early spring 1756, they had secured--apparently with the Governor Reynold's assistance--ten small sailing vessels. Sometime before the beginning of March, 1756, they began coasting northward, with the intention of ultimately returning to Nova Scotia. Despite the wretched conditions aboard these open vessels (most of which were only marginally seaworthy) and despite inducements to settle by officials in present-day North Carolina, this determined band of Acadians pressed steadily onward. Only ninety individuals, less that half of the 200 original voyagers, aboard seven boats reached Massachusetts Bay in July, 1756, and there they were

arrested and detained by British authorities who feared the consequences of their return to Nova Scotia.(15)

Some of the few Acadians remaining in Georgia developed skills required by the local plantation and shipping industries. The oars and pikes that they manufactured were even reportedly exported to the West Indies. Most of the remaining Acadians, however, remained mired in direct poverty. Thus lacking the resources to leave, they appear to have remained in the Georgia coastal region until the 1763 Treaty of Paris ended the fighting between England and France and extended to the exiles an eighteen-month grace period in which to relocate on French soil. Most of the surviving Georgia Acadians appear to have used this opportunity to migrate to French Saint-Dominque (present-day Haiti).(16)

The Acadian experience in Georgia was repeated in neighboring South Carolina, where 942 exiles arrived between November 1755 and late January 1756. South Carolina, populated primarily with the descendants of Huguenots exiled from France half a century earlier, were extremely destressed by the arrival of hundreds of "bigoted Papists," as one contemporary observer labelled them, who were fully expected either to incite to rebellion the local slave population which already outnumber whites by a two-to-one margin or to lead to victory neighboring, French-allied Indians. The fears of the South Carolinians seemed abundantly justified by the unbridled animosity and "impudence" of the exiles toward their captors. An unidentified South Carolinian noted that "they are insolent Rascals, [who] talk in a high strain, calling themselves Subjects of the french King, own they were Neutrals, and that they took up Arms against us... They say they'll settle here, if

we'll allow them such Privileges with their Priests... They will not even upon any Terms take the Oaths of Allegiance--By this we may judge what a pernicious dangerous Gang they were in Nova Scotia."(17)

Hundreds of Acadians were consequently forced to remain aboard their overcrowded transports for nearly one month while reluctant hosts decided what to do with them. When health conditions became such that the colonial government was finally forced to allow the exiles to land, the exiles were herded together slong the beaches, where they were evidently encouraged to leave the colony aboard merchant vessels bound for England. The government, meanwhile demonstrated no determination to resolve the festering Acadian question, and unwilling to endure any longer the uncertainty clouding their future, large groups of exiles attempted to escape into the North American interior on at least three occasions within two months of their arrival. Fearing that they would join hostile Indians there, the South Carolina government mobilizerd posses to pursue and return the first two bands of fugitives. Only thirty Acadians managed to escape; their fate is unknown. The third attempt was somewhat more successful. A small band of undetermined size escaped from its detention cap, made its way to the Santee River Valley where its members stole goods, arms and ammunition from a local plantation, and set out in search for Fort Duquesne, the French stronghold in the Ohio Valley. Only two Acadians are known to have completed the trek.(18)

The Acadian desire to leave South Carolina matched that of the native South Carolinians who desperately wanted them to leave. Consequently, during its April, 1756, session, the colonial assembly

authorized public subscriptions in the amount of 12,000 pounds, with all contributions dedicated to the purchase and outfitting of two ships which would provide the exiles passage out of the colony. The local citizenry quickly raised the necessary funds, and two "ancient" vessels and "a small quantity of bad provisions" were purchased and proferred to the Acadians. Though anxious to leave, the exiles were fully cognizant of the dangers in sailing unfamiliar waters. Sensing the South Carolinians' sense of desperation, the Acadians thus demanded that the colonial government provide pilots before they would agree to leave. This request was summarily rejected, for though the South Carolinians fully expected the Acadians to return to the Bay of Fundy area, the hiring of two pilots for this voyage would have constituted an official endorsement of their repatriation and the inevitable wrath of the British administration.(19)

Conceding the point, an undetermined, but large number of South Carolina Acadians boarded the two proferred ships and immediately set sail for Nova Scotia. Their vessels shipped so much water, however, that they were obliged to beach them near Hampton, Virginia. The Virginians near the landing site were quite as intimidated by the Acadian presence as had been the South Carolinians. They therefore permitted the exiles to pool their resources--400 Spanish piastres--to purchase a vessel and continue their odyssey.(20)

This ship, however, proved quite as unseaworthy as its two predecessors, and the Acadians were forced to beach it somewhere along Maryland's Atlantic coast. For two months, the makeshift Acadian crew labored to repair the "wreck". They ultimately succeeded in making the

vessel seaworthy, and again set sail for the Bay of Fundy. Fortune smiled more kindly upon the Acadians during this voyage, and they eventually made their way to the St. John River, in present-day Nova Scotia. Upon debarkation, many of the male survivors joined Lt. Charles Deschamps Boishebert's small French force and subsequently waged guerilla warfare against the British in Nova Scotia.(21)

The courageous example of these voyagers remained a powerful example to those Acadians who remained in exile in the southern Atlantic colonies. In both Georgia and South Carolina, the remaining Acadians, particularly those who had difficulty in finding gainful employment, were forcibly distributed throughout the coastal counties. Families were divided, and teen aged males were bound out to planters as indentured farm laborers (thereby giving rise to the unfounded legend that Acadians here were sold into slavery) or, less commonly, apprenticed to artisans. In many instances, indentured Acadians had to be bound in irons and forcibly removed from their families. Such cruelty provided the catalyst that drove almost all of the remaining Acadians from South Carolina and Georgia. The evidence suggests that of those who survived the onslaught of smallpox and other epidemic diseases in the aftermath of their arrival, many eventually congregated in the coastal settlements from which they surreptitiously sailed for the Bay of Fundy area or for the French colony of St.-Domingue.(22)

Maryland and Pennsylvania

The Middle Atlantic Colonies, unlike their southern counterparts, maintained strict control over their Acadian populations, perhaps

because they felt more directly threatened by French and Indian forces to the west. Thus lacking mobility, the Acadian exiles in these colonies were completely at the mercy of their Anglo-American custodians. In view of Maryland's origins as a refuge for persecuted English Catholics and neighboring Pennsylvania's beginnings as a Quaker colony, one would expect the Acadian experience here to have been relatively mild, and indeed, it has been depicted as such by Anglophile historians. Yet, this chapter of the Acadian diaspora is among the bleakest of many dark episodes along North America's Atlantic Coast.

The first Acadian exiles arrived at Annapolis, Maryland, the provincial capital, sometime between September 20 and 30, 1755. Because the 913 exiles, packed aboard four dreadfully overcrowded transport vessels, had consumed all of their allotted provisions in route to their destination and thus the host community was compelled to provide immediate support for their unexpected guests. The burden thus imposed upon the colonial capital's population occasioned considerable grumbling from both the general population and the local press, and as a consequence, and emergency meeting of the Provicical Council was convoked to partition the exiles among the Maryland counties. One of the transports was subsequently dispatched to the Patuxent River, a second to the Wicomico River, a third to the Choptank River, and the Fourth, the Leopard, was directed to remain at the provincial capital.(23)

Upon reaching their destinations within Maryland, the Acadians found themselves in rather unenviable circumstances. As nominal British subjects, they were not entitled to any particular assistance

from the provincial or local governments, and as French-speaking Catholics in a region that was at war with French Catholics, they were both shunned, feared, reviled by the region's Anglo-Protestant majority. Native Catholics were legally enjoined from assisting their co-religionists. Some assistance was provided by a few philanthopic individuals--often by those who had previously been most vocal in their support of the proposed Acadian expulsion, but, because of the broad range of basic services required by the exiles and the correspondingly heavy financial burden which they entailed, these good samaritans were soon compelled to abandon their wards. Fully cognizant of the incompatability between their job skills and those required by the Maryland economy, the Acadians demanded that the government recognize their status as prisoners of war and accordingly provide food and shelter for them. The government, however, rejected, this claim, indicating that the Acadians had acquired full British citizenship though the "conventions of 1730." Consequently, at least one group of Acadians was literally forced to exist, without shelter, in the frozen, snow-covered countryside, huddling together for warmth, for several days before adequate shelter could be found. Forced to make their own way in the world, the Acadians grudgingly accepted the low-paying and often degrading jobs offered by the reluctant hosts and gradually improved their lot, though never rising above the poverty level.(24)

While unable to provide economic assistance to the Acadians because of their British citizenship, the provincial governemnt paradoxically treated the exiles as prisoners, adopting regulations to restrict their individual liberties and freedom of movement in early 1756. At the

Governor Horatio Sharpe's urging, the provincial legislature adopted, on April 23, 1756, "An Act to Empower the Justice of the Several County Courts, to Make Provision for the Late Inhabitants of Nova Scotia, and for Regulating Their Conduct." The bill, reflecting the prevailing public revulsion, fear and suspicion of the French-Catholic immigrants, requied the exiles, which were characterized as indolent and obstinate, to "rely upon their own Labour and Industry to procure a comfortable subsistence for themselves." In cases where Acadian parents appeared either unable or unwilling to support adequately their children, the county magistrates were empowered to "bind out" Acadian children "upon the best terms they could make" (vis a vis the provincial government) with local artisans, planters, or businessmen. All unemployed, but able-bodied Acadians were to be deemed vagrants and were to be jailed until they manifested an interest in finding employment. To ensure that employment was indeed available, the number of Acadians exceeding the local labor demand were to be transferred to neighboring counties where there was surplus labor.(25)

The act also furnished the magistrates with administrative machinery for preventing the exiles from reaching the colony's vulnerable western border, where British troops were under orders to shoot the Acadians on sight. All Acadians wishing to travel more than ten miles from their residence were required to secure a passport from the local justice of the peace. Violators were subject to citizens' arrests, five-day imprisonment, and subsequent, forcible removal to the prisoner's abode.(26)

The Acadians' freedom of movement was further restricted by

Maryland's militia restrictions. Through "An Act for Regulating the Militia of the Province of Maryland," enacted on May 22, 1756, the Acadian exiles were banned from attending militia training sessions; failure to comply with the prohibition would inevitably result in detention "out of View of the Said Place of Training until sun set that day."(27)

During the two years in which it was in force (1756-1758), the anti-Acadian acts effectively reduced Acadian mobility, and, in late August, 1756, Horatio Sharpe could assure his counterpart in Nova Scotia, Charles Lawrence, that "None of the french who were imported into this Province have ben suffered either by Land or Water to return... thither [Nova Scotia]."(28)

Though confined to their host province for the duration of the Seven Years' War and though oppressed by their host government, the Acadian community bent under the pressures brought to bear against it, but it did not break. Throughout the conflict, the Acadians openly supported the French military victories. Such successes, however, became more and more infrequent as the war progressed. France's ultimate defeat, which also dashed their lingering hopes of repatriation to Nova Scotia, hung like a pall over Maryland's Acadian community in the 1760's.(29)

Repatriation had symbolized liberation from the dreadful conditions under which the Acadian population existed in Maryland. Victims of malnutrition and epidemic diseases, Maryland's Acadian community had actually declined by twenty-seeven percent (913 to 667) between 1755 and 1763. Mired in poverty, many exiles could not afford adequate

housing or food. Widows generally survived by begging from door to door. Such activities produced a sharply negative backlash among native Marylanders who were taxed to support those Acadians who could not suppor themselves. Thus, by the mid-1760's, the surviving Acadians desperately longed for an opportunity to leave the site of their captivity, while the native Marylanders were equally anxious to see them leave. Thus, in the late 1760's, most of the Maryland Acadians, responding to invitations to migrate to Louisiana from friends and relatives newly established in the Spanish colony's Attakapas District, pooled their resources, chartered ships, and sailed to the Mississippi Valley. Those burdened with large families, particularly widows, often joined the exodus by virtue of subsidies granted by local governmental bodies.(30)

The Maryland Acadians were joined in their trek to Louisiana by most of the surviving Acadians in Pennsylvania. The Acadian experience in the Quaker colony bears a striking parallel to that of the exiles in neighboring Maryland. The 454 Acadians who arrived in the Delaware River before Philadelphia between November 18 and 20, 1755, became the scapegoats for the colony's raging francophobia, resulting from successful French and Indian raids on the Keystone colony's western borders. These popular fears were soon translated into action by Pennsylvania Governor Robert H. Morris, who placed the exiles under armed guard aboard the three vessels (the Hannah, Three Friends and Swan aboard which they had sailed from Nova Scotia), and he then detained a large contingent of provincial militia in Philadelphia to

protect the colonial capital from the perceived (but non-existant) military threat posed by the unarmed exiles.(31)

While thus detained aboard the overcrowded vessels, the acadian exiles succumbed to various epidemic diseases. These diseases posed a real threat to Philadelphia and spurred the provincial government into further negative actions. At Morris' suggestion, the Acadians were quarantined on Province Island--at public expense--until the ravages of these diseases abated. Only after the threat of contamination had subsided, did the Pennsylvania legislature seriously consider the long-term disposition of the exiles. Legislation signed into law on March 5, 1756, named four prominent Philadelphia Huguenots sympathetic to the plight of the Acadians to a commission to coordinate the dispersal of the exiles throughout the easternmost Pennsylvania provinces. These commissioners were to place one Acadian per county township, provided that the township wardens of the poor accepted them. The commissioners would also rent land for Acadian farmers, who were to be given a maximum of ten pounds' worth of agricultural implements to help them support themselves. Widows, orphans, and other exiles incapable fo supporting themselves were to be placed on the dole. All of these expenses were to be supported by the provincial war chest.(32)

The foregoing act was to remain in force for one year, at the expiration of which the Acadian exiles would presumably have been self-sufficient. The theoretical base upon which it was conceived was sound, but the legislation failed miserably in practice. Most rural townships, in which the Acadian agriculturists could conceivably have found a new life, refused to accept the exiles who were almost

universally viewed as potential fifth column element. Meanwhile, the Acadians themselves refused to be dispersed, for they fully understood that such dilution of their numbers would inevitably result in their assimilation by the Anglo-Protestant majority. The exiles thus congregated in Philadephia's slums, where they remained on the government dole for the duration of the Acadian dispersal act.(33)

When government support of the exiles ceased in September, 1756, the Acadian leaders in Philadelphia demanded permission to leave Pennsylvania, noting that they lacked the means of supporting themselves and preferred to die in their native land. The Acadian remonstrance concluded on a defiant note, stating "we shall never freely consent to settle in this province."(34)

Quaker William Griffith persuaded the legislature that the Acadian outburst had been prompted by their wretched economic circumstances. According to Griffith, most of Pennsylvania's Acadians had been refused employment by bigoted Philadelphia businessmen. Able-bodied Acadians and responded by making wooden shoes and fabricating cloth from discarded rags in an attempt to support themselves, but, as no market existed for these commodities in the colonial capital, they had no means of supporting themselves. Acting out of frustration and desperation, many Acadians had resorted to petty thievery to support themselves and their families. Many exiles nevertheless lived on an inadquate diet which included "neither meat nor bread." They thus fell victim to various epidemic diseases which decimated their numbers.(35)

Persuaded of the exiles' plight by Griffiths, the Pennsylvania legislature sought to resolve the festering Acadian problem once and

for all. In January 1757, the assembly passed a bill, signed into law on January 18, that required Acadian parents to apprentice their children to Anglo-Armerican artisans to ensure their support. These children would be educated in the English language. Aged, infirm and handicapped Acadians, on the other hand, would be supported by the government.(36)

The Acadians loudly protested this heavy-handed effort to destroy their families and to assimilate forcibly their children into the dominant culture. Demanding to know whether they were "subjects, prisoners, slaves, or freemen," Philadelphia Acadians again sought permission to leave the Keystone Colony, offering to sell their meagre personal possessions to secure passage to another colony. The Pennsylvania government officially ignored these protests, but made no move to enforce the foregoing legislation.(37)

Such governmental inertia, however, was counterproductive, for it drove the Acadians to desperation. Many Acadian men publicly proclaimed their desire to abandon their wives and children and to join the French forces to the west in their war against the Anglo-Pennsylvanians. Their "mutinous" spirit was sufficiently disruptive to attract the attention of Lord Loudoun, commander-in-chief of British forces in North America who ordered the arrest of several prominent Acadians to subdue the exiles. The Acadians responded with a remonstrance in French setting forth their grievances. Lousoun "returned it and said [he] could recieve no memorial from the King's subjects but in English, on which they [the Acadians] had a general meeting at which they determined they would give no Memorial but in

French". Infuriated by the Acadian response, Loudoun ordered the incarcerated Acadian leaders placed aboard the H.M.S. Sutherland, a British warship bound for England.(38)

Though these Acadian prisoners were subsequently acquitted, released, and returned to Philadelphia, their absence deprived the exiles of their spokesmen. The Acadians nevertheless remained notoriously intransigent and insolent--from the Anglo-Protestant viewpoint--resisting renewed government efforts in 1761 to "bind out" their children and petitioning King George in 1760 to redress their grievances against the Pennsylvania government. In 1763, they notified the French crown of their desire to migrate to France and, when that avenue of escape sdid not materialize, may Pennsyvania Acadians accepted the Comte d'Estaign's 1764 invitation to migrate to St.-Domingue. Used as forced laborers by the French government and forced to carve a naval base from the jungles along the island's northern coast, most of these refugees died of tropical fevers, while their children perished from malnutrition and scurvy. Most of the Pennsylvania Acadians, however, remained in and around Philadelphia until the late 1760's, when they joined their relatives and friends exiled to neighboring Maryland in a massive migration to Louisiana.(39)

New York

The misery of the Acadians exiled to the Middle Atlantic Colonies was shared by their countrymen sent to New York and Connecticut. Unlike neighboring New Jersey, which refused to accept any of the exiles, New York reluctantly opened its doors to three contingents of

Acadians. The first, consisting of an undetermined number of Cape Sable Acadians, arrived aboard a schooner on April 28, 1756. Two hundred additional Acadians reached New York harbor aboard the Experiment the following May 6. These exiles were the survivors of the ship's original complement of 250 Annapolis Royal Acadians. Setting out from Nova Scotia in December 1755, they were carried by a powerful winter storm to Antigua. Here several Acadians escaped their captors and made their way to the French Antilles. The remaining captives, however, were forced to continue the five-month voyage to New York, and reportedly arrived there "poor, naked and destitute of every convenience." The third contingent of Acadians came from Georgia en route to Nova Scotia and were detained by New York's governor upon reaching Long Island on August 22, 1756.(40)

New York looked to the Middle Atlantic Colonies for guidance in dealing with its Acadian wards. In July 1756, the colonial assembly adopted legislation patterned upon Maryland's "Act to Empower the Justice of the Several County Courts, the Make Provision for the Late Inhabitants of Nova Scotia, and for Regulating Their Conduct." Unlike the Middle Atlantic Colonies, however, New York successfully implemented its statuatory regulations instituted against the Acadian population. The exiles were distributed throughout those New York counties farthest from French Canada--those on Long Island and Staten Island. In addition, at least 100 of th 344 Acadians (32 pecent) known to have lived in exile in New York were indentured to Anglo-Americans in late August 1756. A significant, but undetermined number of the Acadians thus indentured rebelled against forcible separtion from their

families by bolting for French Canada in 1757; most of the fugitives, however, were subsequently captured and imprisoned. The abortive escape attempt seems to have quelled further resistance, and the New York Acadians quietly endured captivity until the Treaty of Parish afforded them an opportunity to leave. Most of these exiles appear to have migrated to St.-Domingue, where they shared the fate of their 111-starred confreres from Pennsylvania; and additional twenty New York Acadians made their wya to Louisiana via Mobile in early 1764.(41)

Connecticut

The attempt by the New York government to regiment the Acadian population pales by comparison to that of Connecticut. Believing that the security of New England hinged upon that of Nova Scotia, the Connecticut legislature, in November 1755--months before the arrival of the first Acadians--passed a resolution authorizing the colonial governor to take any steps necessary to dispose of any French Neutrals sent there for detention. Acting under this mandate, Governor Thomas Fitch convoked the legislature into emergency session upon the arrival of the first contingent of Acadians and, under his guidance, bills were enacted to distribute the anticipated influx of exiles among fifty designated towns. The legislation also directed the "selectmen" [aldermen] of each town to maintain the integrity of nuclear families in partitioning the anticipated waves of exiled immigrants. These local officials were also to provide public assistance to indigent and handicapped Acadians and to maintain strict contols over their able-bodied confrères to provent them from departing their designated

host communities and congregating into larger, potentially dangerous groups.(42)

The first Acadians thus distributed arrived at New London aboard the Elizabeth on January 21, 1756. These 277 exiles from Annapolis-Royal were followed the next day by 173 more Acadians from the Minas Basin area (Mines, Grand Pré, Pisiquid) arrived at New London aboard an unidentified schooner. In May 1756, 260 Acadians reached Connecticut aboard the Edward which, like the Experiment destined for New York, had been driven to Antigua by a hurricane-force winter storm. There, the Acadians apparently contracted smallpox, and this disease decimated the exiles during their subsequent passage to New London.(43)

Upon arrival, these Acadian immigrants were distributed throughout Connecticut in conformity with the foregoing legislation. Little is known of their subsequent activities other than the fact that their movements were severely restricted. But it is nevertheless obvious that the exiles were extremely dissatisfied witht he conditions under which they lived in Connecticut, for in 1763, 666 Acadians (91 percent of the Acadians know to have been sent to that colony and apparently all of the survivors) there petitioned the French king for transportation to France. When French assistance failed to materialize, some of the disgruntled Connecticut Acadians accepted the invitation of the St. Domingue government, surreptitiously left their scene of their exile, and ultimately found themselves impressed into forced work gangs at the french naval base of Mole St. Nicolas on Santo Domingo's northern coastline. In 1767, an additional 240 Acadians, led

by their erstwhile parish priest, pooled their resources, chartered the Pitt, a merchantman, and probably sailed for the St. John River Valley in New Brunswick or Quebec. Only a handful of Acadians appear to have remained permanently in Connecticut.(44)

Massachusetts

The Acadian experience in Massachusetts has traditionally been viewed as the darkest chapter of the diaspora. The conditions encountered by the exiles in Massachusetts, however, were generally no worse than those which they endured in other Atlantic seaboard colonies.

Because of Governor Shirley's role in the conspiracy to deport Nova Scotia's Acadian population, the Bay Colony received at least twice the number of exiles transported to any other British North American colony--perhaps as many as 1,500. The first Acadians arrived at Boston on November 12, 1755, and, within one week, there were approximately 2,000 Acadians aboard British ships in Massachusetts Bay. Most of these early Acadians, however, were destined for other seaboard colonies and remained in Massachusetts waters only long enough for their ships to be refitted. The Seaflower, which cast anchor at Boston on November 19, 1755, carried the colony's first permanent Acadian residents, 206 former Pisiquid settlers. They were followed on December 13 by 136 Minas Basin Acadians aboard the Swallow, and on December 26 by a large, but undetermined number of exiles. Between December 26 and Janauary 15, four more shiploads of Acadians were cast upon Massachusetts' shores. The final contingent of Acadian

immigrants, ninety French Neutrals who were stubbornly attempting to return to Nova scotia from exile in Georgia were arrested and detained when they landed south of Boston in August 1756.(45)

Like Acadians elsewhere, these exiles contracted smallpox upon contact with the established Anglo-American population, and having no natural immunity to this disease, their numbers were decimated by it. Yet, because of the virulent francophobia among the native Bostonians no governmental assistance was immeidately forthcoming, and only a single Anglo--future Massachusetts governor Thomas Hutchinson--appears to have stepped forward to provide the exiles with a modicum of relief.(46)

Indeed, the Massachusetts government--like its counterparts throughout the British North American empire--was far more concerned with distributing and contolling the Acadians than with their general welfare. Upon arrival, each group of exiles was distributed among the "Country towns", which were expected to provide housing and presumably food for the exiles, but only during their initial winter in the colony. The Acadians thereafter were expected to be self-supporing, and local justices of the peace and overseers of the poor were empowered by the colonial legislature "to employ, bind out or support said Inhabitants of Nova Scotia" should they display any abhorrance for work.(47)

Eventually realizing that the Acadians were overwhelmingly farmers lacking the skills required by the provincial job market, the provincial assembly, on March 1, 1756, required those lcoal Massachusetts officials charged with oversight of the exiled population

to provide "implements of husbandry, and those for weaving, spinning, and other handcraft work according to the capacity of the individual." Those failing to take advantage of this generous offer faced immediate disciplinary action by the welfare agents. By early April, for example, sufficient Acadian children had been forcibly indentured to elicit an outcry from Acadian leaders in at least six Massachusetts communities. This outburst caused the provincial legislature to moderate its "workfare" policy, and local welfare agents were prohibited from dividing Acadian families except in cases of dire need. The government also periodically investigated reports of malfeasance, or nonfeasance on the part of local welfare officials and routinely interceded in cases where complaints were justified.(48)

The provincial government, on the other hand, disregarded Acadian protests regarding governmental efforts to control their movements. The first Acadian exiles sent to the "Country towns" apparently enjoyed virtual freedom of movement, and many reputedly escaped to the St. John River Valley, from which they apparently made their way to Quebec. Many Acadian men also appear to have found employment at sailors aboard merchant vessels and fishing boats sailing from Massachusetts ports. Finally, many other exiles appear to have wandered from town to town for months in search of friends and relatives. Such freedom of movement by potential fifth columnists greatly disturbed the native population. On April 15, 1756, the provincial legislature responded with legislation prohibiting ship captains from hiring Acadians, and, in May 1757, a second act prohibited the exiles from leaving the corporate limits of the towns to which they had been assigned under

pain of a fine for the first offense, flogging for the second.(49)

The regimentation of the Acadian population by the provincial government was greatly relaxed with the end of the French and Indian War in 1763. Acadians, in large numbers, abandoned the towns to which they had been assigned in 1755-1756 and began to congregate on the colony's larger urban areas. With communications between the various Acadian groups thus reestablished, the exiles in Massachussetts, like those in other Atlantic seaboard colonies, petitioned the French government for resettlement in France, and when French assistance failed to materialize, at least 300 Massachusetts Acadians left the colony for French St.-Domingue. An additional 300 attempted to follow their countrymen shortly thereafter but were prevented from doing so by the provincial government. Meanwhile, several hundred other Massachusetts Acadians secretly left the colony for Quebec by way of Lake Champlain.(50)

The Acadians remaining in Massachusetts then demanded work and improved living conditions or British-subsidized resettlement in Canada. The former demand was rejected, but, having grown weary of the Acadians, the provincial assembly entertained the second request. Acadian delegates were dispatched to Canada to confer with the Canadian governor, who agreed to permit the Massachusetts Acadians to resettle in Canada, provided they took an oath of allegiance to Britain. On June 2, 1766, 720 Acadians in Boston, 140 in Salem, and significant numbers of Acadians in other Massachusetts towns took an unconditional oath of allegiance to King George and prepared to leave the Bay Colony. Few Acadians possessed the resources to leave Massachusetts by

ship, and these generally sailed to Quebec. The remainder then walked over land, theough the wilderness to either their Nova Scotian homeland, or to Quebec. Those who reached Nova Scotia after a four-month trek through present-day Maine and New Brunswick found their homeland occupied by former New Englanders. Many Acadians were apparently unable to reconcile themselves to the new state of things, and many chose to settle in New Brunswick. But those wishing to start life anew in Nova Scotia were given small land grants (a minimum of 40 acres) at the northern and southern extremities of Nova Scotia (the Baie Ste. Marie and northwestern Cape Breton Island areas), where the sterile soils made the areas undesirable to the now well established English Fundy Basin settlers.(51)

New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island

The Acadians who returned to the Canadian Maritimes from exile in Massachusetts during the mid-1760s were not the only Acadians in the region. It is indeed a popular misconception that all of the Acadians were deported form the region in 1755. Only 6,000-7,000 of Nova Scotia's 12,000-18,000 resident Acadians were removed from their homeland during the Grande Dérangement. Those who escaped deportation became fugitives. Hundreds made their way to neighboring île St.-John (present-day Prince Edward Island), a French possession which ahd been established earlier in the eighteenth century by Acadians no longer wishing to remain under British rule; by 1758, there were approximately 3,400 Acadians residing there.(52)

Thousands, however, made their way into the forests of present-day

New Brunswick. Under the leadership of Abbé LeGuerne, most of these refugees (some estimates place the figure at approximately 4,000) made their way to the Miramichi area. Having fled their homes with little more than the clothes they carried on their backs, these refugees, many of whom were women whose husbands had already been sent into exile from Beaubassin, lacked adquate shelter, food and clothing. Starvation, exposure and disease claimed hundreds of Miramichi Acadians during their first winter in exile. The dire prospects faced by the Miramichi colony caused several hundred survivors to migrate to Quebec the following spring. There, they remianed until the fall of New France's capital in 1759. Many hundreds, nevertheless, remained and attempted to start life anew. This task, made difficult by the sterile soil of the settlement region and the debilitated condition of the survivors, became virtually impossible in 1758 when British search and destroy missions designed to protect British communication lines during the anticipated Quebec campaign prevented the refugees from either farming or fishing in coastal waters. Starvation again set in and the Mirimichi Acadians faced the prospect of another "winter of discontent".(53)

The problems of the Miramichi Acadians were shared by those Acadians established in the Petit Codiac River Valley near the Nova Scotian border. Unlike the Miramichi refugees, however, most of these Acadians had settled in present-day New Brunswick before 1755, and they thus were not disarmed by British forces shortly before the onset of the Grand Dérangement. Led by Joseph Broussard dit Beausoleil, the Petit Codiac Acadians formed para-military resistance units that

conducted raids deep into Noval Scotia and even operated a privateer against British vessels on the Bay of Fundy.(54)

Like many of their counterparts along the northern New Brunswick coast, the Petit Codiac Acadians were disheartened by the fall of Louisbourg, the French bastion in the region, in 1758. Faced with the prospect of famine and no longer sustained by the hope of a French military vicotry over their oppressors, these Acadians were compelled to surrender in late 1758 and early 1759. They were sent to detention centers, in Haifax, where with the exception of work-release programs allowing them to maintain the Bay of Fundy dykes for the English families who had occupied their farms, they remained for the duration of the war. In 1764, the Halifax detainees contemplated reestablishment in St. Domingue, but eventually sailed for the Mississippi Valley in November 1764. Two hundred and thirty-one of them arrived unannounced at New Orleans in February 1765.(55)

England and France

The Acadians who had fled île St. Jean were also taken prisoner by English forces in 1758 and over 3,000 of them were deported to France aboard cartel ships. There, they congregated in the slums of the northeastern coastal cities. France's initial Acadian refugees were subsequently joined by several hundred additional exiles taken as prisoners of war by British forces at the fall of Quebec City in 1759. Like their predecessors, they lived in poverty in the ports of St. Malo and Morlaix. Their numbers were augmented in 1763 by 753 Acadians from England, survivors of the 1,500 Acadians rejected by Virginia and sent across the Atlantic to Great Britain in 1755.(56)

Though a minority of the Acadians in France, the Acadians from England were particularly significant, for they played a crucial role in shaping the outcome of the French effort to "repatriate" the exiles. The so-called repatriation of the Acadian exiles to France resulted from the sympathy felt by French diplomats attempting to negotiate an end to the Seven Years War in England for the misery and deprivation experienced by those Acadians in English coastal detention centers. Living in virtual imprisonment, under conditions far worse than any experienced by their relatives in the eastern seaboard colonies, these Acadians had watched helplessly as half their fellow exiles died from epidemic diseases, particularly smallpox. Moved with pity for what he saw, M. de la Rochette, secretary to the French minister plenipotentiary, circulated a letter among the Acadians in England in which he urged the exiles to cooperate with French diplomatic efforts to liberate them, stating "your treatment in France will be still more advantageous than you expect." These circular letters helped secure the cooperation of the skeptical Acadians, who, in turn, apprised their relatives in the eastern seaboard colonies of the forthcoming diplomatic negotiations on their behalf; which in turn, prompted the Acadians in the British North American colonies to petition the French king for repatriation.(57)

Only those Acadians in England, however, were "repatriated" at French expense. Before crossing the English Channel, these Acadians expected special treatment, particularly resettlement upon fertile land and the reestablishment of their pre-dispersal lifestyle; these dreams

were shattered immediately upon arrival in France. Like the Acadians who had preceded them to the mother country, they found themselves literally dumped in coastal cities, where, except for a small welfare subsidy (insufficient to pay either rent or food), they were abandoned by the crown. Indeed, many Acadians found themselves literally forced to live in the streets, with no prospect of improving their lot. The economies of the French coastal cities were devastated by the war and British blockade and thus offered few job opportunities; the Acadians, on the other hand, generally lacked the job skills demanded by urban job markets and thus could not find employment where jobs existed. Fully cognizant of the Acadians' plight, many unscrupulous French businessmen and landowners attempted to exploit the exiles ruthlessly. One landowner suggested that the government institute "workfare" and send the Acadians to work in his mines, while other "land sharks and swindlers" attempted to have the Acadians reduced to the status of peasants and employed as workers on French estates. The unscrupulousness of these individuals was such that it caused the French minister of state, Etienne François, duc de Choiseul-Stainville, an indivisual not generally known for his compassion, to intervene on the Acadians behalf. In 1765, he established a small group of exiles on Belle-île-en-Mer, a rocky, wind-swept island off the Breton coast. The colony endured seven years and collapsed, the result of crop failure, drought, livestock epidemics, and the opposition of native Frenchmen.(58)

Cayenne [French Guyana] and the Falkland Islands

Choiseul's attempt to establish an Acadian colony at Belle-île-en-Mer may well have stemmed from his own pangs of conscience, for he himself had earlier expoited the exiles' misfortune. At the end of the Seven Years War in 1763, Choiseul desperately attempted to rebuild France's shattered overseas empire. France's few remaining overseas possessions required reinforcement, but few native Frenchmen refused to leave their homeland for an uncertain future in the topics. Choiseul therefore turned to the Acadians cast upon France's shores as a potential pool of colonists, and the exiles were not completely unreceptive to his overtures. Finding life in France merely a continuation of their exile, the Acadians mired in the coastal slums desperately sought to leave the country under any conditions. Hence, in 1763, an undetermined number of exiles (at least several hundred) volunteered to participate in Choiseul's effort to populate Cayenne [French Guyana]. Most of these intrepid Acadians succumbed to tropical diseases with months of their arrival, and the few survivors were returned to France, penniless and dejected, in subsquent years.(59)

Hundreds of other Acadians joined in 1763 Bougainville's ill-fated colonization attempt on the Falkland Islands. The colony struggled until Anglo-Hispanic hostilities over the islands forced the Acadians to return to France ten years after its establishment.(60)

St. Pierre and Miquelon

When it became apparent that these colonization attempts were no panaceas, the Acadians in France turned their attention to St. Pierre

and Miquelon, two tiny, barren islands near the Canadian Martimes which remained France's only North American possessions after the Seven Years War. In 1767, hundreds of Acadians migrated there, but they met with the same disastrous results as their tropical colonization ventures and most of the participants subsequently returned to France.(61)

Louisiana

At the time of the St. Pierre and Miqulon colonization attempt, some Acadians also looked to louisiana for resttelement. In September, 1766, one Semer, an Acadian residing at Le Havre, received a letter from his son, Jean-Baptiste, who had recently settled at the Attakapas post in Louisiana. The younger Semer described Louisiana in glowing terms and his father spread reports of his son's good fortune throughout the communities of exiles in France. France, which had transferred western Louisiana, including the Attakapas post, to Spain in 1763, refused to subsidize a migration of Acadians to Louisiana. The Acadians thus remained marooned in France until 1785, when the Spanish government, acting through Henri Peyroux de la Coudrenière, a French soldier of fortune recently returned from Louisiana, and Oliveir Terrio (Theriot), recruited approximately 1,600 Acadians for resettlement in Spain's sprawling Mississippi Valley colony.(62)

The migrations of Acadians from France, Halifax, and the Middle Atlantic colonies to Louisiana will be discussed in the next essay.

FOOTNOTES

1. Interview with Jean Daigle, then director of the Centre d'Etudes Acadiennes at the Universite de Moncton, Moncton, Nouveau Brunswick, Canada, at New Iberia, Louisiana, Oct., 1977.

2. Richard, Acadian, I, 220-224, 319; Brebner, New England's Outpost, p. 127.

3. Griffiths, Creation of a People, p. 46, 49-51; Brebner, New England's Outpost, pp. 176, 183; Richard, Acadia, I, 355-356.

4. This remarkable rate persisted despite a 28 pecent infant mortality rate and a 50 percent child mortality rate. Griffiths, Creation of a People, p. 14; Clark, Acadia, pp. 99-100, 121-131, 201-212.

5. Lauvriere, Tragedie, I, 307-313, 387-395, 410; Akin, ed., Adadie and Nova Scotia, pp. 234-376, 391, 409; Brebner, New England's Outpost, p. 209; Richard, Acadia, I, 217-226.

6. Griffiths, Creation of a People, p. 54; Akins, ed., Acadia and Nova Scotia, p. 258, 263-267.

7. Lauvriere, Tragedie, I, 396-397, 446, 448-449, 455-459, 484; Akins, ed., Acadia and Nova Scotia, pp. 267-269.

8. Lauvriere, Tragedie, I, 456-459, 464, 471-472, 482-483.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid., I, 479, 484-493.

11. Clark, Acadia, p. 346.

12. Robert G. Leblanc, "The Acadian Migrations," 15.

13. Lawrence Henry Gipson, The British Empire Before the American Revolution, vol. VI, The Great War for the Empire: The Years of Defeat, 1754-1757 (New York, 1964), p. 283.

14. Ibid., VI, 286-344.

15. Ibid., pp. 287-88; John Reynolds to the British Board of Trade, April 16, 1758, Public Record Office, London, England, Board of Trade Papers, Georgia, Volume 27.

16. Gipson, British Empire, VI, 290-291.

17. Ibid., VI, 291-293.

18. Ibid., VI, 292-293.

19. Ibid., VI, 293-295.

20. Ibid., VI, 294-295.

21. "Memoire sur les Acadiens, " 1763, Canadian Archives, Report (1905), II, Appendix F, p. 151.

22. Gipson, British Empire, VI, 295-297.

23. Carl A. Brasseaux, "The Founding of New Acadia: Reconstruction and Transformation of Acadian Society in Louisiana, 1765-1865," 2.vols. (these de doctorat, Université de Paris, 1982), I, 90-91.

24. John Thomas Scharf, History of Maryland from Earliest Times to the Present Day, 3 vols. (Baltimore, 1879), I, 476-477; Gregory A. Wood. The French Presence in Maryland, 1524-1800 (Baltimore: 1978), p. 77; Basil Sollers, "The Acadians [French Neutrals] Transported to Maryland," Maryland Historical Magazine, III (1908), 14; Maryland Gazette, July 21, 1767.

25. Brasseaux, "New Acadia," I, 95-96.

26. Ibid., I, 96-97.

27. Ibid., I, 97.

28. Ibid.

29. Sollers, "Acadians," 18; Maryland Gazette, February 10, 1757.

30. Brasseaux, "New Acadia," 98-102.

31. Wilton Paul Ledet, "Acadian Exiles in Pennsylvania," Pennsylvania History, X (1942), 120; Pennsylvania Colonial Records: Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania, 16 vols. (Philadelphia, 1838-1853), VI, 712.

32. William Reed, "The French Neutrals in Pennsylvania," Pennsylvania Historical Society Memoirs, VI (1858), 298; Colonial Records, VI, 55-58.

33. Gipson, British Empire, VI, 312; Reed, "French Neutrals," 298-300; Ledet, "Acadian Exiles," 122.

34. Reed, "French neutrals," 300.

35. Pennsylvania Archives: Votes and Proceedings of the House of Representatives of the Province of Pennsylvania, Eighth Series, 8 vols. (Philadelphia, 1931-1935), VI, 4408; Ledet, "Acadian Exiles," 126.

36. Ledet, "Acadian Exiles," 123; Pennsylvania Archives, VI, 4491-4492.

37. Pennsylvania Archives, VI, 4509.

38. The Acadian prisoners were Charles LeBlanc, Jean-Baptiste Galerme, Philippe Melancon, Paul Bijaud, and Jean Landry. Lord Loudoun to William Pitt, April 25, 1757, quoted in ibid., 305.

39. Brasseaux, "New Acadia," 114-118.

40. Gipson, British Empire, VI, 319-320.

41. Ibid., 320-321.

42. Ibid., 321.

43. Ibid., 322-323.

44. Lauvriere, Tragedie, II, 112, 116.

45. Gipson, British Empire, VI, 325-326.

46. Ibid., 325.

47. Ibid., 326-327.

48. Ibid., 328-329.

49. Ibid., 329.

50. Ibid., 333-334.

51. Ibid., 334=336.

52. See D.C. Harvey, The French Regime in Prince Edward Island (New Haven, 1926), pp. 175-238.

53. On the fate of the Acadians who remained in the eastern Canada after 1755, see Carl A. Brasseaux, The Founding of New Acadia: The Beginnings of Acadian Life in Louisiana, 1765-1803 (Baton Rouge, 1987), pp. 20-30.

54. Brasseaux, Founding, pp. 20-22.

55. Ibid.

56. Gipson, British Empire, VI, 336-337; Lauvriere, Tragedie, II, 162, 258-259; Dorothy Vinter, The Acadian Exiles in England," Les Cahiers de la Societe historique acadienne, 30ieme cahier (1971, 388-402; Regis Godefroy Brun, "Le Sojourn des Acadiens en Angleterre et leurs traces dans les archives britanniques," Les Cahiers de la Societe historique acadienne, 32ieme cahier (1971), 62-67.

57. Oscar Winzerling, Acadian Odyssey (Baton Rouge, 1955), p. 39.

58. Ibid., pp. 60-64.

59. AC, B 117:40-51, 117, 159, 196, 206, 313, 360-62, 430; AC, B 119:6; AC, B 120:47, 86, 110, 113, 116, 153, 225, 343, 352, 358; AC, B 135:3rd section, folio 9; Precis historique de l'expedition de Kouru (Paris, 1842); Winzerling, Acadian Odyssey, p. 60; Lauvriere, Tragedie, II, 181-187.

60. Winzerling, Acadian Odyssey, p. 60; Lauvriere, La Tragedie d'un peuple, II, 187-189; AC, B 117:229-339, 426; AC, B 120: 270, 275, 4265; Don Pernetty, Voyage autour du monde de la fregate du roi la Bordeuse et de la flute l'Etoile (Paris, 1772), Vol. I.

61. Winzerling, Acadian Odyssey, p. 64.

62. Ibid., pp. 90-153.

ACADIAN SETTLEMENT IN THE RIVER PARISHES

Jay Edwards

First Settlement of the River Acadians

St. James Parish on the Acadian Coast was the center of the Acadian settlement on the Mississippi.

At the time of their arrival, the Acadians were considered ideal settlers by the Spanish administrators of Louisiana. They were Catholic, small farmers, very poor, apolitical and did not interfere with the Spanish government. In addition, their sentiments, like those of the Spanish, were decidely anti-British. Moreover, they were potentally at least, excellent recruits for the Colonial militia, as they were good marksmen, and many had military experience in Canada. Moreover, they were self reliant to a fault. They would not trouble the administration with pleas for help.

Like the Acadians who first went to Attakapas, aid was required for the initial period of settlement: "They are so poor that when they arrive in these settlements, they come burdened with a family but have not a shirt to wear." (Cruzat to B. Galvez 12/8/1777).

Land was given in small concessions at specified locations only along the Mississippi.

Rations of corn were given to each person. Each family was given "an ax, a hoe, a scythe or sickle, a spade, two hens, a cock and a pig of two months, with which they may easily found and establish a household which will provide them a living or even make them a fortune." (Proclamation of Governor Galvez 2/19/1778).

A shotgun was also given to each head of a family. Sufficient food was delivered from the rations at military posts to enable the Acadians to survive until the first crop was in. The commandant of the local fort also organized hunts on a rotating basis. Meat was apparently shared between the soldiers and construction workers and the Acadian settlers.

The group which arrived 7/67 consisted of roughly 200 families. They were settled near the small fort at St. Gabriel de Manchac, Iberville Parish. The fort had been constructed in 1767.

Document describing conditions of settlement, in R. E. Chandler 1974:69-87. "End of an Odyssey: Acadians arrive in St. Gabriel," La. Louisiana History 14:69-87.

There were several benefits to be gained by the Acadians from living near an established Spanish fort. Guns and ammunition were available. The commandants of the forts supplied the settlers with medical services. There was better defense in case of an Indian (or British) attack. Young unmarried men were given employment at the fort, and the skilled artificers were paid full wages by the Spanish. In addition, a chaple was constructed at the fort and a chaplin was available for services.

The demography of the first settlement at St. Gabriel is of interest. It tells something of the results of the prior ten years of exile. Two hundred and ten individuals settled in 1767. They probably arrived from Santo Domingo, though that is not certain. Thirty married couples existed in the group. Most had children already (only five did

not). Six families were headed by widowers and seven by widows. Four family heads were unmarried. Thirteen orphans came with the group, all were living with established families.

A second group had 208 individuals and 44 families. Of this number, there were 29 married couples (58), all but 4 with children. There were 6 widowers, 7 widows, and 2 unmarried heads of households. There were 14 orphans.

The average age of the group was 20.2 Years. The average father (head of household) was 37.9 and the average mother, 31.1. The widows averaged 50.1 years. There were 108 women for each 100 men.

Hebert and Landry were the most popular surnames (32%). Then, in roughly decreasing popularity: Babin, LeBlanc, Richard, Foret, and Blanchard. The most popular given names were Joseph, Pierre and Jean, Paul, Simon and Charles. Among the girls, Marie was the most popular name, with Marguerite a close second, then Anne, Isabel and Madeleine.

At first the Acadians lived in several large shed-like shelters which they constructed for themselves near the fort. These were temporary shelter, used only until their own houses were complete.

Benefits Provided by the Acadians to the Colony of Louisiana:

1. Increased the population substantially between 1765 and 1790.
2. Cleared and planted much land.
3. Provided extra food for New Orleans markets (was badly needed).
4. Facilitated communication along the Mississippi.

Many of the river Acadians were to be displaced in the 1st few decades of the 19th century due to the expansion of the sugar plantations. They moved westward, or into the back swamps. The center of Acadiana shifted to south central Louisiana. The "Cajunization" of the Acadians took place largely after the first settlement.

Settlement

Natural levees support oak, pecans and hardwoods.

Backswamp supports cypress-tupelo-sweetgum-willow.

Three thousand yards south of the fort St. Gabriel, land was reserved for the Spanish who were then constructing the fort. Downstream of that the Acadians were given title to the lands on the East Bank.

A road was to be constructed along the crest of the natural levee, or often on top of an artificial levee constructed atop it. The Spanish encouraged the Acadians to spend the first summer constructing an artificial levee in front of their properties, "so that when winter comes and the river begins to overflow, they may be safe from the floods."

During the first summer the Acadians were also required to construct boats for each family in order to transport them between their concessions and the fort on a regular basis. The boats were called "Canoes" by the Spanish.

The following year, corn and rice was to be collected back from the Acadians for provisioning the fort. They were to be paid for this

produce at market rates. Anything extra given to the destitute Acadians was to be paid back after their first harvest. All of the land granted was free. The commandant of the fort functioned as the civil administrator for local goverment.

Each house was set next to the road. Other farm buildings were placed behind the main house.

Typical Acadian concessions were 3 to 6 arpents in width (see Table: DISTRIBUTION OF LANDS FOR THE ACADIAN FAMILIES THAT HAVE GONE TO THE SETTLEMENT OF ST. GABRIEL Attached). The size depended on the number of persons in the family. Concessions as small as 2 arpents (a widow with one daughter) or as wide as 8 arpents were granted (a man with 6 dependants). Even these small holdings were further subdivided due to the natural increase of the Acadian population.

Land was brought under cultivation slowly. By 1803-05 when Robin visited the Acadian Coast, no Acadian consession had more than half of its land under cultivation.

Farm layout:

Besides the house, there were chicken coops, a forge, granaries, perhaps a pigeonnier, magazines, slave cabins. All of this is in contrast to the farms of Acadia, where a single barn served many of these functions.

Fences (Clôtures) of pieux (planks) divided the farmyard into several parts.

The house and cuisine were roofed with bark, pieux or shingles. The pieux were up to 9 ft. long, and were pegged to roof lathing.

Crops grown by the early Acadians included: rice, maize, fruits (oranges, peaches, figs, apples, plums and grapes) and vegetables included indigenous varieties such as squash and pumpkins, melons, watermelons, peppers, potatoes and beans. The primary grain after 1710 was corn. The French preferred wheat and imported it from Upper Louisiana and from France, but it was expensive and most Acadians learned to use corn in its place. Corn was often ground with a wooden mortar and pestle. Mills of stone were occasionally used (introduced by the colonial Spanish?).

White corn was ground into flour and was mixed with water or milk to form a mush. White corn mush made with milk was eaten with Gumbo. Yellow or colored corn was broken into rice-sized grains and baked dry in a Dutch oven; Robin speaks of this dish, petit gru, as a common food (1966:198). The same kind of corn, broken into larger grains and cooked with a quanity of water was known as sagamite. Meat, fruits, vegetables and even chocolate were added to it. Fermented corn meal was added to sugar and boiled; this was called cassant. Corn flour mixed with wood ash was known as "cold flour" and was popular for provisioning travelers. Green corn was boiled on the cob or roasted. Corn meal flour was used to make unleavened bread. It was baked in outdoor ovens.

The use of rice was learned very early by the Acadians. According to Robin:

> Louisianians cook [rice] in a closed [cast iron] vessel with a little water so that it is concentrated. The rice swells up without being diluted and it is served without any other preparation in a mass, like bread. It is eaten in combination with other food.

Before the 1730s, much of the meat consumed in Louisiana was dried or smoked meat shipped down from the Illinois country.

Herding developed slowly. After about 1760 large plantations and vacheries in Pointe Coupee and Acadia began producing a surplus of meat, and the colony had no difficulty after that.

Techniques for the preservation of meat were very important to the Acadians on the River. This was accomplished by smoking, salting and drying in the sun. Partially cooked meats were placed in crocks and covered with a layer of hot fat.

Poultry was probably the most common domestic meat. Chicken was the most popular, as nearly every household had a chicken coop. Turkeys, both wild and domestic were also eaten. The same was true of ducks and geese, wild and tame. Many ducks were taken along the Acadian coast. Many other birds were also secured for eating or for taking to market. These included bustards, pheasants, partridges, swans, peacocks, papabots, grassets, and others.

Prior to the arrival of the Acadians, draft animals had been in extremely short supply. The German coast was almost devoid of draft animals throughout the 1730s. After 1735, however, the supply of horses arriving from the Spanish borderlands via Natchitoches improved the situation By the time of the arrival of the Acadians, horses were available to those who could afford them.

Dairy products, especially milk and butter, were obtained on the Acadian Coast through possession of a family cow. Each inventory examined by McCloskey at Donaldsonville mentioned either cattle or

cows. Creole butter was manufacturerd by whipping or shaking cream in a jug, rather than by churning.

Commercial crops were raised by farmers in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. These included indigo (until about 1790 when the crop was destroyed), tobacco and cotton. After 1793, Sugar production changed the entire configuration of the river settlements.

Not all Acadians worked as small farmers. Among the arriving Acadian immigrants were skilled craftsmen, particularly carpenters, masons and blacksmiths. A few listed their profession as "seaman." Others were tradesmen, such as bakers, armorers, tanners, tailors, ship builders and edge-tool makers.

Although the Acadians had traditionally favored wool for their clothing, this gradually gave way before cotton. Before long, Acadians were weaving cotton in home looms. Robin described the use of cotton by Acadians:

> The Acadian women and children go into the fields to pick corn and cotton... They spin the cloth, mosquito nets, and that multi-colored striped cotton cloth so agreeable to the eye, resembling very much our saimoises, out of which they make skirts and blouses, and for the men, pants and jackets.

Laussat (1978: 64) described a visit to an Acadian household in 1803:

> I wanted to see one of those Acadian families which populated this coast (St. James Parish). So I went to the house of Pierre Michel, a cotton and corn planter. He and his wife are sexagenarians. Both born in Acadia, they were married in Louisiana and had seven or eight children. Everybody in the house was at work--one daughter was ironing; another was spinning; and the mother was distributing the cotton, while a number of little Negroes, all under twelve, were carding it, picking out the seeds and drying it.

Refer to the Article on Acadian weaving, (Appendix #1) included.

[Summarized from McCloskey 1981, Chandler, 1973, and other sources.) Best historical materials for this area: Claude Robin and Pierre de Laussat's Memoirs of my Life (1831). Additional material collected from Notarial records of the Clerk of Court's Office in Donaldsonville (LaFourche des Chetimaches).]

The Acadian Coast (1805) [Description taken from Robin]

Above about twenty leagues from the city begins the Acadian Coast which is prolonged about twenty leagues. Like the Germans, they cultivate their lands themselves. A few settlements have a few slaves, and already the population there is such that the lands are divided into two or three arpents for each family. Rice, corn meal, a kind of bean, melons in season, pumpkin, beef and salt pork and poultry form their principal food. Their characteristics may be compared to those of our farmers of Beauce or Brie. Good people! But they haven't in their labors the same European ardor, because on one side they are not excited by pressing needs, and on the other the lack of markets or outlets tends continually to discourage them. However, they are predominently French, loving their country passionately, delighted to entertain anyone, but conceding a great preference for all who come from France.

Springing from an origin ordinarily cold, they are fond of pleasure and love dancing more than all of the rest of the colony. One part of the year they give balls among themselves and travel ten to fifteen leagues to attend them. Everybody dances--grandfather and grandmother, as well as the young ones. Two violins, cost what it may, animates the joyous assembly; four candles which have as candlesticks four blades like pieces of wood, sunk in the wall, constitute the illuminations. Long wooden benches are the only seats offered to friends. On extraordinary occasions, a few bottles of tafia diluted with water compose the refreshments but the preeminent food of the Creoles, "Gumbo" is the dish of which everyone is admitted to partake. Then good evening, good night, good-by until next week, if not sooner. One reaches his pirogue or canoe; the other already is on horseback, running; others, living nearer, sing and joke while walking slowly towards their homes. A clean suit is among them a great luxury. Their wives dress simply in a gingham dress, and the men are not shod either except when in great attire. As for knowledge, they don't even suspect what it is; the greatest number do not even know how to read or write.

Past the Acadian coast the dwellings become more and more isolated. At fifty leagures from the city one finds on the right, the fort of Baton Rouge, populated with a mixture of Acadians and Irish, in less easy circumstances, in proportion to the distance one travels. (C.C. Robin)

ACADIAN SETTLEMENT PATTERNS, 1765-1860

Carl A. Brasseaux

Among the greatest misconceptions surrounding Acadian historiography are those concerning the areas historically occupied by the Acadians. This is seen perhaps most clearly in the creation, by legislative act in 1968, of the twenty-two parish area euphemistically called "Acadiana" in honor of its many Acadian inhabitants. Many parishes in this subregion of Louisiana, however, have never had significant numbers of Acadian residents. These parishes, nevertheless, consciously perpetuate their mythological ties to the Acadian experience in order to cash in on the tourist bonanza that has resulted from the ensuing local, state, regional, and ultimately national fascination with "Acadian" or "Cajun" culture. St. Martinville, on Bayou Teche, and the Acadian Coast parishes of St. James and Ascension, along the Mississippi River, vie for recognition as the cradle of Louisiana's Acadian culture. Mamou, originally settled by ex-French soldiers from Fort Toulouse (present-day Montgomery, Alabama) and Ville Platte, established by Anglos, prairie Creoles and Bonapartist emigrés, now portray themselves as centers of Acadian/Cajun culture, and locals point proudly to their nineteenth-century "Acadian" houses. Avoyelles, Plaquemines, and Pointe Coupee parishes, also settled in the eighteenth century by Creoles, also point to their Acadian heritage. Where, therefore, did

the Acadians actually settle, and how and when did they come to occupy much of South Louisiana? In addition, since the Acadians were only a small part of Louisiana's French community, just how much of South Louisiana did they actually occupy?

The Phantom Acadian Immigrants of 1758

For much of this century, historians believed that the first Acadians had arrived in Louisiana in 1758. This belief--stemming from the late 1820 writings of pioneer Louisiana historian Francois-Xavier Martin--was based upon the misinterpretation of a document in France's Archives Nationales. Through an apparent clerical error, several documents for the French post of Louisbourg, a military fortress on Cape Breton Island in Canada, for the year 1758 were misfiled in several Louisiana archival series. One such document was entitled "Census of the Acadian Farmers Residing at Port Toulouse", a minor, short-lived settlement on an islet near Cape Breton Island. An inspection of the names included in the list verifies that the enumerated Acadians were former residents of Louisbourg who had apparently fled the British conquest of the post. Martin and several historians, including the famous French-colonial researcher Nancy Miller Surrey, finding this document among the Louisiana materials in France's National Archives, subsequently interpreted the document as the "Census of the Acadian Farmers Residing at Fort Toulouse", a minor French installation at the present location of Montgomery, Alabama. Extant post and Louisiana administrative records make no mention of

any Acadian presence at Fort Toulouse, and the names listed in the aforementioned list do not appear in subsequent Louisiana census reports.[1]

Original Settlement Patterns, 1764-1803

I. The Acadian Coast, 1764

The first documented arrival of Acadians in Louisiana occurred in April 1764, when twenty unidentified exiles reached New Orleans via Mobile, Alabama. They were given some modest material assistance by Louisiana's caretaker French administration and were settled along the border between the then-developing Cabannoce post (present-day St. James Parish) and the Second German Coast (present-day St. John the Baptist Parish).[2]

II. Attakapas and Opelousas Posts

These Acadians were followed in late February 1765 by 231 Acadians who had come to New Orleans from detention camps in Halifax, Nova Scotia, via St-Domingue (present-day Haiti). Like their predecessors, they were given modest material assistance (land grants, seed grain, a few tools and implements) and sent to the Attakapas post, where they had agreed to raise cattle on shares for former French military officer Antoine Bernard Dauterive. Dauterive, however, was notoriously paranoid and was constantly quarrelling with his associates. His abrasive personality led to an almost immediate break with his Acadian partners, who were apparently settled on his former

ranch, located on the east bank of Bayou Teche within the present corporate limits of St. Martinville, La. (Dauterive transferred title to this parcel of land to the Acadians in order to acquire a larger and less flood-prone tract on the opposite bayou bank.) Within three weeks of their arrival, the Attakapas Acadians had abandoned the east-bank ranch and had congregated at sites near present-day Parks, La. and present-day Loreauville, La.[3]

An unidentified epidemic during the late summer and fall of 1765 caused these Acadian "encampments" to disperse, apparently around the beginning of September. By mid-September, a large contingent of Attakapas Acadians, apparently from the camp d'en bas near Loreauville, had migrated to the Cabannoce post. With their arrival, the Cabannoce post supported a population sufficiently large to warrant a post commandant, and such an official was duly appointed shortly thereafter. The remaining Acadians broke up into five small groups and dispersed throughout the western bayou region. One contingent remained in the Parks area, while another established itself at La Manque (a place name used only once--in the January 1766 census of the Attakapas post), the area apparently above Parks, around present-day Breaux Bridge. Other Acadians remained near Loreauville and their settlement became known, by January 1766, as Fausse Pointe. A fourth group established itself at Côte Gelée, the area between present-day Pilette (near Lafayette) and present-day Broussard. The final Acadian contingent migrated northward, to the Opelousas post, where they were

settled on the western bank of Bayou del Puent, along the present eastern corporate limits of the city of Opelousas by landowner Jacques Courtableau.[4]

These initial settlements served as staging areas for future Acadian demographic expansion. Like frontiersmen throughout the Anglo-American colonies, the direction of this expansion was steadily westward, but, unlike their Anglo-American counterparts, the Acadians moved only from stream to stream because the intervening prairies were deemed uninhabitable. Lacking timber for lumber and firewood and having a shallow and nearly impenetrable claypan which made it extremely difficult to dig wells, the grasslands were utilized only as pasturage for cattle. The impetus for this migration was provided by cultural friction between the exiles and their less numerous, but more politically influential, Creole neighbors. Self-styled aristocrats, the Creoles viewed the Acadians as interlopers and trespassers. Having established themselves upon huge tracts of land that they had claimed as their own until Spanish land grant regulations nullified their tenuous titles to all but a maximum of one square league (2.5 miles square) in 1770, the Creoles very much resented the Acadian incursion into their realm which had resulted in their dispossession. The Creoles also aspired to social and economic prominence in emulation of France's feudal vestiges. As members of the colony's social aristocracy, they tended to view the Acadians as peasants and attempted to cast them in such a role in Spanish colonial Louisiana. The Acadians, whose ancestors were drawn from the French peasantry, had no

intention of relinquishing the sense of self-dignity and independence that their forebearers had gained through self-sufficiency over generations of residence in Acadia/Nova Scotia. The inevitable result was tension, attempted intimidation of the Acadians by the Creole population (usually through the colony's legal system), and, ultimately, a violent response from the Acadians.[5]

Acadian-Creole clashes were apparently directly responsible for the migration of the Opelousas Acadians to Prairie Bellevue, between the present communities of Opelousas and Sunset in St. Landry Parish, and from the La Manque and La Pointe settlements to the upper Vermilion Valley (above present-day Lafayette). Land grants issued in both areas are dated 1776, when a regional survey conveyed titles to landholders who had completed the many preliminary steps necessary to procure a Spanish patent to their properties. As this certification process often required years to complete, it is certain that the Acadian exodus from the 1766 settlements began at least in the early 1770's.[6]

While the Acadians were dispersing from the upper Attakapas and Opelousas settlements, a similar demographic movement was underway in the lower Teche Valley. From the Fausse Pointe settlement, a small group of Acadians moved to the Chicot Noir area (just below present-day Jeanerette, La.) by the mid-1770's. There they remained until 1785, when they sold their property to Creoles and migrated to the lower Vermilion Valley, around present-day Abbeville. Meanwhile, in the early 1770's, Acadians in the Côte Gelée settlement were moving into

the central Vermilion Valley, around modern Lafayette. There, they received Spanish land grants in the late 1770's (usually after the 1776 and 1778 general land surveys).[7]

Few Acadians ventured beyond the Vermilion in colonial times. The intrepid few who did were settlers in the Opelousas post. Venturing forth from the Prairie Bellevue settlement a handful of Acadians reestablished themselves along upper Bayou Plaquemine Brulee, in the vicinity of present-day Church Point, Louisiana, by the mid-1770's. The cluster of settlers on the eastern bank of Bayou Plaquemine Brulee remained the westernmost Acadian settlement of consequence during the colonial period (pre-1803), but a few individuals made their way into the prairie expanses to the west and north. Members of the LeJeune family, for example, established themselves upon widely separated plots between present-day Church Point and Eunice, while the Pitre family migrated northward into present-day Evangeline Parish, which had already been settled by former French troops who had migrated from Fort Toulouse (present-day Montgomery, Alabama) to the Opelousas post in 1764. Finally, around the turn of the nineteenth century, several prominent Vermilion Valley families began to purchase from the indigenous Attakapas Indians large tracts of land near present-day Mermentau, Louisiana, for use as <u>vacheries</u> (ranches). These latter families, however, were speculating in these lands and apparently did not reside upon them immediately.[8]

The pathway into the prairies blazed by these Acadian pioneers was followed by succeeding generations of Acadians in the early nineteenth century. By 1803, all of the prime lands along the Teche and Vermilion

had been occupied, and young Acadians were faced with the choice of remaining upon the small, sometimes unworkable ribbons of land that they had inherited through Louisiana's forced heirship laws or to venture forth into the vast unclaimed expanses of prairie to the west and carve for themselves a more substantial farmstead. The fact that the unclaimed land--forming the royal domain during the period of Spanish rule--was now government property and not for sale, at that time, does not seem to have impeded the westward migration of Acadians from Bayous Vermilion and Teche during the early 1800s. Because only a small portion of these lands--most of them lying in present-day Lafayette Parish--were sold by the government land office before the start of the Civil War, these settlers were technically squatters upon government lands, and they were viewed as such by the more affluent Acadians remaining in the bayou basins.[9]

Most of these squatters were concentrated in the western half of present-day Acadia Parish. Significant numbers of Acadians had also made their way into the prairie region of northern Vermilion Parish (the area above the "trembling prairie" marshlands) and into eastern Calcasieu Parish (the southern half of present-day Jefferson Davis and eastern Calcasieu parishes). Here, the Acadians almost universally established ranches, and their cattle were regularly driven to New Orleans in a manner reminiscent of Hollywood's stereotypical treatment of the great western cattle trails.[10]

The Acadian migration to the western periphery of the southwestern Louisiana prairie region was encouraged in the late 1850s by a major local vigilante movement, centering in Lafayette, St. Martin, Vermilion

and St. Landry parishes. Though it began as a spontaneous backlash against rampant banditry, the movement quickly degenerated into a vendetta by upper class Acadians against lower class Acadians, particularly those poor Acadians with unsavory personal reputations.[11]

The Eastern Acadians

The westward migrations of the Attakapas and Opelousas Acadians and their nineteenth century descendants contrasts sharply with the southeasterly movements of their cousins east of the Atchafalaya River. As indicated above, the first Acadian settlers along the "Father of Waters" were the 1764 immigrants, who were established near the boundary of present-day St. James and St. John the Baptist parishes. The eighty Acadian refugees who followed them in May 1765, were established just upstream at the nascent Cabannoce post (present St. James Parish), where they were joined, by mid-September 1765, by approximately 80 refugees from the still raging Attakapas epidemic.[11]

The River Settlements

These early groups of Acadian immigrants formed what they hoped would be the nucleus of a new Acadian homeland, a homeland in which those Acadians still in exile throughout the western world would be able to congregate and re-establish their pre-dispersal existence. These hopes are perhaps expressed most eloquently in the names which the Acadian settlements in both the Attakapas and Cabannoce districts

were simultaneously christened--New Acadia.[12] A new Acadia would indeed arise from the ashes of the old in lower Louisiana, but its demographic form was dictated not by the Acadians, but by the colony's new Spanish regime. Shortly after his arrival at New Orleans in early March, 1766, Antonio de Ulloa, first Spanish governor of Louisiana, toured the lower colony's far-flung outposts and acquired a first-hand knowledge of the region's military vulnerability. Having brought to Louisiana only 100 Spanish troops, Ulloa knew all too well Spain's inability to defend adequately the west bank (Spanish side) of the Mississippi River, which formed the international boundary between the North American empires of Spain and Great Britain. Spain's only hope of mounting an adequate defense against the perceived (but non-existent) British military threat, Ulloa believed, was to station groups of Acadian immigrants at strategic sites along the lower Mississippi. The Acadians, who were noted for their marksmanship and their virulent anglophobia, were, in Ulloa's eyes, the ideal choice for the colony's first line of defense. Hence, in July 1767, 210 Acadians from Maryland were dispatched to Fort St. Gabriel (present-day St. Gabriel, La.) in Iberville Parish, and the 149 exiles who followed them from the Chesapeake Bay area were assigned to San Luis de Natchez, where they were settled two-and-a-half miles dowstream from present-day Vidalia, La.[13]

Because of the distances separating the two latter settlements from their predecessors and because of the increasingly forceful means employed by the Spanish to coerce reluctant immigrants into compliance

with Spain's new defense/settlement policies, the dispersal of the new Acadian immigrants was, in the view of many established Louisiana Acadians, a second dispersal. Having nowhere else to go, the former exiles resolved to use every means at their disposal to defeat Spanish designs and to realize their goal of creating a new homeland. For example, the Acadians assigned to San Luis de Natchez used what would now be called civil disobedience in a futile effort to prevent their forcible establishment at San Luis de Natchez; they prolonged the trip by procrastinating when preparing to depart each day, then they drew up a long list of grievances against their long-suffering commandant whom they accused of selecting an unhealthy site, exposed to attack by thousands of British-allied Choctaw Indians then gathering on the east bank of the Mississippi. When Commandant Pedro Piernas rejected their demands to return to the established Acadian communities downstream, the Acadians selected delegates and sent them to New Orleans with an appeal to Ulloa.[14]

Enraged by such a display of "insolence" and "ingratitude," Ulloa ordered the San Luis Acadians to remain at their assigned post or to face deportation--at their own expense. Cowed into submission, the Acadian deputies sailed upstream, carrying to Cabannoce and St. Gabriel reports of Ulloa's alleged cruelty. These reports aggravated the already tense relations existing between the immigrants and the Spanish regime. As a consequence, scores (perhaps as many as 200 to 300) of Acadian immigrants from the lower river settlements participated in the successful coup d'etat that toppled the Ulloa regime on October 29, 1768.[15]

The necessity of maintaining good relations with Louisiana's Acadian community--the largest cultural group in rural south Louisiana by the late 1760s, according to one Spanish observer--was not lost upon Ulloa's successor, Alejandro O'Reilly. After restoring Spanish rule to Louisiana on August 19, 1769, O'Reilly, in a conciliatory gesture, authorized an official investigation into the legitimacy of the complaints filed in 1768 by the San Luis de Natchez setters. In late December 1769, the commission's findings were released supporting the Acadian claims and the San Luis Acadians were permitted to relocate downstream, in present-day Ascension Parish, shortly thereafter.[16]

This move reconciled the Acadians to their new rulers, but O'Reilly's gesture was merely that. Those Acadians established along the river were prevented from joining relatives in other posts by regulations, promulgated by O'Reilly's successor, Luis de Unzaga, in the early 1770s. These regulations, intended to prevent the depopulation of the strategic river settlements, required Acadians to find buyers for their developed farms before passports to the western posts could be issued in their names. Only with the end of the American Revolution and the Spanish occupation of the east bank of the Mississippi below Natchez did relaxation of the foregoing regulations begin and, at that late date, most of the Acadians who initially wished to relocate had already died or their investment in their riverside farm had become so great that they could not afford to leave their lands behind. Only a handful of Acadians thus crossed the Atchafalaya Basin after 1783. There was, on the other hand, a major demographic movement into the central and lower Lafourche Basin.[17]

The Lafourche Basin

The Acadian migration into the Lafourche area apparently began in the late 1760s, during the period of governmental instability, as children of the Acadian Coast's original landowners, as well as German Coast settlers migrated there in search of new lands. Rapid population growth was responsible for this demographic movement. Between 1766 and 1777 the population of the Cabannoce post increased by 226 percent and there was not sufficient unoccupied arable land available to satisfy the demand. Consequently, by 1771, there was sufficient population along the bayou to warrant its separation from Cabannoce as a separate governmental subdistrict, and, by the mid-1780s, the Church of the Assumption ecclesiastical parish had become a distinct subdistrict of the once vast Lafourche district.[18]

The largest influx of Acadians into the Lafourche area, however, occurred in 1785, with the arrival of nearly sixteen hundred Acadians from France. Under the direction of Intendant Martin Navarro, who, as an aide to Governor Ulloa, had witnessed the adverse Acadian response to governmental interference in their selection of settlement sites, the 1785 immigrants were given free rein in the choice of their future homes. Four of the seven shiploads of Acadians selected home sites along Bayou Lafourche and subsequently settled between present-day Labadieville and Raceland. A fifth contingent, settled initially along Bayou des écores (present-day Thompson's Creek, just above Baton Rouge), migrated to Lafourche Basin following destruction of their farmsteads by the terrible 1794 hurricane, whose torrential rains

literally washed away their homes. The central Lafourche's 823 French Acadian pioneers were also joined in the 1790s by numerous settlers from the Acadian Coast river settlements.[19]

Additional settlers from the river settlements established themselves, after 1795, along Bayou Terrebonne, in the vicinity of present-day Houma. While the Acadian influx into the Terrebonne area was under way, at the turn of the nineteenth century, small numbers of Acadians were establishing themselves on the high ground along the small rivulet that would become, later in the nineteenth century, the Attakapas Canal, and in the Chackbay area. Subsequent waves of immigrants found a haven at Pierre Part and along Bayou Black. The significance of this demographic movement in populating the lower bayou and coastal parishes is seen perhaps best through the following examination of the 1830 census of Terrebonne Parish. In 1830, fully forty-four percent of Terrebonne's residents had been listed as inhabitants of Assumption Parish or the Acadian Coast parishes in 1810.[20]

The Coastal Zone

The movement into the Terrebonne and eastern St. Mary parish areas appears to have peaked in the second and third decades of the nineteenth century, and Acadian immigration into this region dropped off sharply after 1830, apparently because the prime lands had been occupied. Displaced Acadians thereafter appear to have moved "down the

bayou", and by the 1880s, there was an almost unbroken line of settlement along the banks of the Lafourche from the Gulf Coast to the Mississippi.[21]

West Baton Rouge and Pointe Coupee

While most of the displaced Acadians were moving from their homes along the Mississippi and the upper Lafourche to new lands along the lower bayous and in the coastal region, a secondary and tertiary movements were underway in the Second Acadian Coast (Iberville Parish) region. In the first phases of Acadian settlement in Iberville Parish, the exiles were consistently established on the east bank of the river. Acadians had come to occupy west bank properties by 1770, and the stragglers who reached the post in 1770 via Texas and Natchitoches, Louisiana, were given west-bank lands just above the mouth of Bayou Plaquemine. From this foothold, the Acadians steadily, if slowly, pushed the frontier northward, toward the Creole settlements on the left (western) bank of False River, and, by 1807, there were sufficient Acadians in present-day West Baton Rouge to justify the parish's establishment as a separate governmental subdistrict. In addition, there were reportedly Acadians residing on the right (east) bank of False River by the 1830s. This marked their northernmost penetration into the traditionally Creole parishes in antebellum Louisiana.[22]

Conclusions

The Acadians arrived in far smaller numbers, and occupied far less territory, than has been traditionally assumed by the general public. Approximately 1,000 Acadians arrived in Louisiana during the first wave of immigration (1764-1770). Less than 1,600 exiles (probably 1,596) reached Louisiana as part of the second migration in 1785. An undetermined, though undoubtedly small, number of Acadians made their way to Louisiana in subsequent years, as part of small-scale movements by stragglers and through the arrival of the Santo Domingo refugees, but they had an almost negligible cultural and economic impact upon south Louisiana. The earlier immigrants, however, arrived at a time when their settlement sites were virtually unpopulated. They thus easily displaced their Creole and Indian predecessors as the predominate cultural group in their new homeland. This, coupled with their tightly knit familial structure and lack of mobility, assured their cultural survival.

Those areas occupied by the Acadians before the Civil War include all or part of the following, modern Louisiana civil parishes: West St. Martin, Lafayette, St. Landry, Acadia, Jeff Davis, Calcasieu, Cameron, Vermilion, Iberia. East : St. James, Ascension, Iberville, West Baton Rouge, Pointe Coupee, Assumption, Lafourche, St. Mary, Terrebonne.

FOOTNOTES

1. Census of the Acadian farmers residing at Port Toulouse, 1758. AC, C 13a, 40:157.

2. D'Abbadie to Choiseul, April 6, 1764. AC, C 13a, 44:37; Voorhies, ed., Some Late Eighteenth Century Louisianians, pp. 114-119; Janet Jehn, comp., Acadian Exiles in the Colonies (Covington, Ky., 1977); Arsenault, Histoire , VI, 2560-2561.

3. Brasseaux, New Acadia, p. 92.

4. Ibid., pp. 94-98.

5. Ibid., p. 92, 167-176.

6. Ibid., pp. 98-99.

7. Ibid., p. 96.

8. Ibid., p. 100; Carl A. Brasseaux, "Opelousas and the Alabama Immigrants, 1763-1766," Attakapas Gazette, XIV (1979), 112-117.

9. Brasseaux, "New Acadia," II, 396.

10. Ibid., II, 396-397.

11. Brasseaux, New Acadia, p. 102.

12. See the early records in the St. Martin de Tours and St. Gabriel Catholic church registers.

13. Brasseaux, New Acadia, pp. 82-86.

14. Ibid., pp. 82-86, 88, 89, 181-182.

15. For the latest work on the 1768 New Orleans rebellion, see Carl A. Brasseaux, Denis-Nicolas Foucault and the New Orleans Rebellion of 1768 (Ruston, La., 1987).

16. Brasseaux, New Acadia, p. 104.

17. Unzaga to Dutisne, March 4, 1773, AGI, PPC, 189A:359; Galvez to Dutisne, November 10, 1777, AGI, PPC, 193B:195-196; Unzaga to Judice, March 15, 1774, AGI, PPC, 189B:539.

18. Voorhies, Some Late Eighteenth Century Louisianians, pp. 210-214, 271-280; Census of St. James Parish, 1777, AGI, PPC, 190:192-205; Census of Ascension Parish, 1777, AGI, PPC, 190:173-191; Census of Iberville, 1770, AGI, PPC, 190:240-256.

19. Brasseaux, "New Acadia," I, 215.

20. Ibid., I, 213; U. S. Bureau of the Census, Population Schedules, Louisiana, 1810 and 1830.

21. Brasseaux, "New Acadia," II, 388-391.

22. John Earle Uhler, "James Ryder Randall in Louisiana," Louisiana Historical Quarterly, XXI (1938), 532-546; Carl Brasseaux, et al., The Courthouses of Louisiana (Lafayette, La., 1977), pp. 177-178.

ACADIAN IMMIGRATION INTO SOUTH LOUISIANA, 1764-1785

Carl A. Brasseaux

The Acadian diaspora has been the subject of intense scrutiny by both popular and scholarly writers since the publication of Longfellow's Evangeline in 1847. These wirters have focused their attention upon the continuing debate over the moral and political aspects of the massive deportaion of Acadians from Nova Scotia in 1755, the subsequent distribution of the exiles among the British seaboard colonies, and their ensuing ordeal as de facto prisoners of war.[1] Though of equal importance to the ultimate dispositon of the exiles, the post-expulsion wanderings of the Acadians have remained a lost chapter in North American history.

This lacuna in Acadian historical literature has existed in the face of an embarrassment of French, British, American, and Canadian archival resources which document each stage of the so-called Acadian odyssey.[2] Particularly abundant are the materials relating to the largest post-expulsion colony--the Acadian settlements in Louisiana.[3] Careful examination of the documentary record reveals that the Acadian migration to the Mississippi Valley was orchestrated in no small part by the exiles themselves. This image constitutes a radical departure from the traditional views of the Acadian influx which tended to regard this migration either as a fortuitous happenstance or as the spontaneous migration of independent groups of exiles to what they considered to be France's last outpost on the North American continent.[4] These interpretations of the Acadian influx,

however, merely belied the one-dimensional vision of historians limited to one archival resource--the general correspondence of Louisiana's colonial administrators in France's Archives Nationales. The limited material formerly available to Louisiana historians also contained numerous gaps in factual documentation, forcing the students of Acadian history to engage in speculation, particularly regarding the dates of arrival and the settlement patterns of the exiles who sought refuge in Louisiana.[5] Some scholars, for example, had speculated that Acadians began to establish homes in Louisiana as early as 1756, one year after the dispersal.[6] The evidence now clearly indicates that the influx of Acadians into Louisiana did not begin until after the promulgation of the Treaty of Paris (1763), which provided an 18-month grace period during which Acadians detained in British territory could relocate on French soil, and, at that time Louisiana was still a de facto French territory. The first Acadians to reach Louisiana following their release were 20 individuals from New York.[7] This group included Acadians deported to New York in 1755 and relatives recently released from detention camps at Fort Edward, Nova Scotia. Arriving at New Orleans in early April 1764, after a brief stopover at Mobile, they were settled by Louisiana's caretaker French administration along the Mississippi River above New Orleans, near the boundary between present-day St. John and St. James parishes.[8]

These immigrants were followed, in late February 1765, by 193 Acadian refugees from detention camps at Halifax.[9] These Acadians initially sought to relocate at Saint-Domingue (present-day Haiti), the French sugar island to which approximately 2,000 of their fellow exiles

had fled in late 1763 and early 1764. The refugees from the mainland, however, quickly discovered that life in the Antilles was far more difficult than it had been under English dominion: Acadians were impressed into work details and sent to build the Mole St-Nicolas naval base in the midst of a jungle. The workers were unpaid, receiving as compensation for their labors discarded clothing and inadequate supplies. Their children quickly succumbed to the twin scourges of malnutrition and disease (usually scurvy), while they and their wives fell victim to the climate and endemic fevers. Those Acadians who survived were generally unable to find an economic niche in the island's plantation economy, which offered few oportunities to independent farmers and became tenant farmers.[10]

As the Halifax Acadians prepared to migrate to the French Antilles, letters form Saint-Domingue reached them carrying reports of maltreatment by French colonial authorities.[11] Repelled by substandard food and clothing, tropical diseases, and social and economic incompatibility with the island's plantation economy, the Saint-Domingue Acadians resolved to migrate en masse to French-speaking Quebec via the Mississippi Valley, and they invited their cousins in Halifax to join them.[12] Incredible as it may seem, extant sources in Halifax (particularly British intelligence reports) indicate that local Acadians, driven to desperation by the recent reports from St. Domingue and by the British government's rejection of their efforts to be settled in Canada, embraced this ambitious scheme. Indeed, the Halifax Acadians reportedly anticipated the creation of a major Acadian settlement in Illinois.[13]

Their dreams, of course, were never realized. Although the Halifax Acadians chartered a boat for Saint-Domingue, they subsequently discovered that the vast majority of their confrêres were either dead or destitute and unable to afford passage to Louisiana.[14] The Halifax Acadians, led by the legendary Joseph Broussard dit Beausoleil, were thus forced to change ships and continue on alone to the Mississippi Valley.[15] Arriving at New Orleans in late February, 1765 with little more than the clothes they carried on their backs, 193 Halifax Acadians were greeted by a colonial government nearly as destitute as they. Louisiana had been partitioned by the Treaty of Paris (1763) into English and Spanish sectors. Anticipating expeditious occupation of the trans-Appalachian and trans-Mississippi regions respectively by British and Spanish authorities, the French government failed to send material assistance and provisions to Louisiana after 1763.[16] Moved by pity, Louisiana's French caretaker administrators nevertheless mobilized what limited resources were available, providing each family with land grants, seed grain for six months, a gun, and crude land-clearing implements. The Louisiana government also provided a former military engineer, Louis Andry, to conduct them to the Attakapas District, a frontier post selected for their settlement, and to supervise their establishment.[17]

Though thus thwarted in their efforts to reach the Upper Mississippi Valley, subsequently harassed by the Attakapas commandant, and decimated by either malaria or yellow fever in the summer and fall of 1765, the Halifax Acadians survived these calamities and, by dint of their unstinting industry, soon prospered.[18] Antonio de Ulloa,

Louisiana's first Spanish govenor who arrived at New Orleans on March 5, 1766, stood in awe of his newly established Acadian subjects, who, he observed, literally worked themselves to death to provide for their destitute families as well as their orphaned and widowed relatives. Their persistent labors quickly transformed the region's semi-tropical jungles into productive farms, and within a decade the exiles enjoyed a standard of living at least equal to that of their predispersal homeland. The Attakapas Acadians were clearly sustained in their herculean tasks by a desire to create a new homeland not only for themselves but also for their displaced friends and relatives. Thus, when Ulloa toured the Acadian settlements along Bayou Teche in late spring 1766, the Attakapas settlers sought permission to invite their relatives remaining in exile to join in their good fortune.[19] By this means, the Attakapas Acadians sought to reunite their scattered families in their adopted home, which they now proudly called "New Acadia."

When Ulloa equivocated, citing the necessity of securing royal authorization, the immigrants characteristically ignored the governor's pleas to desist and in 1766 and 1767 numerous letter of invitation from Attakapas Acadians were circulating widely among the Acadians remaining in exile in Maryland and, later, in Pennsylvania.[20] Pooling their meager resources to charter local merchant vessels for Louisiana, hundreds of Acadians--at least 689 of the 1,050 known survivors in Maryland and Pennsylvania--boarded vessels in Chesapeake Bay ports for Louisiana.[21] Arriving at New Orleans, these refugees were greeted as cordially as their predecessors and were offered land and material

assistance to facilitate their establishment.[22] Amicable relations between the immigrants and their Spanish hosts soured, however, as bitter dispute arose in 1767 and 1768 over the new Acadian settlement sites. No objections had been voiced when at least 200 Maryland Acadians had been sent to Cabannoce (present-day St. James Parish) and later to Ascension Parish in the fall of 1766.[23] The caretaker French government had been compelled by circumstances to settle approximately 80 late-arriving Halifax Acadians at Cabannoce in May 1765, and the proximity of the new settlement sites to those of 1765 seemed to portend realization, or at least partial realization to the Acadian dream of familial reunification.[24] However, the subsequent waves of Maryland and Pennsylvania Acadians were forcibly dispersed, in conformity with Spanish defensive strategy. Extremely concerned about the vulnerability of Louisiana's eastern frontier to Indian and British encroachment and lacking the troops necessity to protect its extensive borders, Ulloa decided, in May 1766, to employ the immigrants in the colonial defenses. After May 1766, each wave of immigrants was assigned to a specific site along the Mississippi River which constituted the international boundary between British and Spanish teritory. Although the Acadian settlement sites were sometimes isolated and vulnerable to attack, Ulloa hoped that the markmenship and virulent anglophobia of the immigrants would make the new river posts an adequate first line of defense in the event of Anglo-Hispanic hostilities. Thus, in July 1767, 210 Acadians were assigned to Fort St. Gabriel, while in Feb. 1768, 149 immigrants were ordered to San Luis de Natchez, near present-day Vidalia, Louisiana.[25]

The dispersal of the immigrants earned the Spanish government the enmity of the Acadian community which, by 1768,[26] ad emerged as the predominant cultural group in Lower Louisiana, outside New Orleans and its environs.As a result, the Acadians became active participants in the ouster of Ulloa during the New Orleans rebellion of 1768.[27] Marching into New Orleans on the morning of Oct.29, 1768, scores of exiles (perhaps as many as 200-300) took up arms to force the Spanish governor's unceremonious departure from Louisiana.

Spanish control over the colony was restored in August 1769. As a conciliatory gesture, Alejandro O'Reilly, Ulloa's successor as governor, permitted the disgruntled San Luis de Natchez settlers to migrate to the Acadian settlements along the Mississippi River in late December 1769. This judicious move did much to placate the colony's Acadian population. But Hispano-Acadian friction and the instability during and following the October 1768 insurrection seems to have discourgaged further Acadian immigration into Louisiana. Indeed, while it is possible that a handful of individuals may have found their way to the colony in ensuing years, only one small group of Acadians is known to have arrived in Louisiana between 1768 and 1785. In 1770, a haggard band of 30 Acadians arrived at Natchitoches, Louisiana after a fifteen-month ordeal of shipboard starvation, mutiny, shipwreck, imprisonment, and forced labor in Spanish Texas, and finally a 420-mile overland trek to Louisiana. After succussfully resisting government efforts to settle them permanently in the Natchitoches post, these refugees established homes first in the Iberville district and later at Opelousas.[28]

The arrival of these immigrants marked the end of the Acadian influx from the Atlantic seaboard colonies. The next wave of Acadian immigration emanated from France, but, once again, Louisiana influences served as the catalyst for migration. In 1766, letters from Attakapas Acadians to relatives in France had much the same impact as they had had earlier on their counterparts in Maryland.[29] Indeed, the approximately 2,500 Acadian refugees in France endured conditions at least as bad, and in some cases, worse than those suffered by the exiles in English captivity.[30] But Acadians in France lacked the resources to take advantage of the opportunity to seek a better life in Lower Louisiana, and the financially embarrassed French government refused to subsidize their relocation as it would benefit only the Spanish crown.[31]

TABLE I

ACADIAN MIGRATIONS TO LOUISIANA, 1764-1788

Place of Origin	Date	Number of Exiles
New York	1764	20
Halifax	1764-1765	311?
Maryland & Pennsylvania	1766-1770	689?
France	1785	1,596
St.Pierre/Miquelon	1788	19
TOTAL		2,635?

Thus forced to remain in France and to endure several disastrous

resettlement programs in succeeding years, the Acadians maintained their interest in Louisiana through a steady flow of correspondence that crossed the Atlantic in the 1760s, 1770s, and early 1780s.[32] Though none of these letters has survived, numerous references to them in Louisiana, French, and Spanish colonial archives indicate that many, perhaps most, Louisiana Acadians managed somehow to contact their displaced relatives overseas and, by extolling the virtues of the Mississippi Valley's salubrious climate, fertile soil, and abundant unclaimed lands, enticed them to rejoin their kinsmen in the new Acadian homeland. Indeed, the volume of Acadian correspondence reached such proportions that in 1767 exiles at Belle-Isle-en-Mer, France could describe accurately the location and status of literally hundreds of relatives in St. Pierre and Miquelon, Quebec Province, the Canadian Maritimes, the thirteen English seaboard colonies, and Louisiana. These letters helped to keep alive the spark of interest in Louisiana colonization among the Acadians in France, and this continuing interest was successfully exploited in 1784 by Henri Peyroux de la Coudrenière, a French soldier of fortune recently returned form Louisiana. The Spanish government had recently sponsored unsuccessful efforts to enlist Iberian Spaniards and Canary Islanders to populate and hispanicize the lower MIssisssippe Valley and which was actively seeking alternate sources of recruits. By providing colonists for Louisiana, Peyroux anticipated a handsome reward form grateful Spanish monarch. Working through Acadian showmaker Oliver Terrio, Peyroux gradually overcame the initial Acadian incredulity and the subsequent resistance of the French government in organizing the largest single

migration of Europeans into the Mississippi Valley in the late eighteenth-century. Between mid-May and mid-October 1785, 1,596 Acadians boarded at various French ports seven New Orleans-bound merchant vessels chartered by the Spanish government for their transportation.[33]

Upon arrival at New Orleans, the 1785 immigrants were housed in converted warehouses on the western riverbank. While recuperating from the deleterious effects of their trans-Atlantic voyage, they selected delegates to inspect potential home sites in Lower Louisiana. On the basis of their represenatatives' reports, the exiles selected, on an individual basis, the most appealing settlement. Individual interests, however, were usually subordinated to those of the group, as eighty-four percent of the immigrants endorsed the sites recommended by their delegates. Four of the seven groups of passengers elected to establish communities along Bayou LaFourche, settling between present-day Labadieville and Raceland.[34] Two other contingents of French Acadians selected lands along the Mississippi River near Baton Rouge.[35] The final group of immigrants accepted lands along lower Bayou des écores (present-day Thompson's Creek); this group was later forced to relocate along Bayou Lafourche when a 1794 hurricane unleashed torrential rains that literally washed away their farms.[36]

The resettlement of the Bayou des Ecores Acadians marked the final episode of the major Acadian migration to Louisiana in the late eighteenth century. Only nineteen Acadian refugees from St. Pierre Island, Canada, led by Capt. Joseph Gravois, are known to have arrived <u>en masse</u> at New Orleans in the fall of 1809. The evidence suggests,

however, that these latter-day immigrants had already lost much of their ethnic identity and, when forced by circumstances to remain in New Orleans, were quickly amalgamated into Crescent city's flourishing Creole culture.

The eighteenth-century immigrants, on the other hand, successfully maintained their identity. The settlement sites of the Acadians along Bayou Lafourche, the Mississippi River, and earlier along Bayou Teche provided the exiles a niche in which to reconstruct their shattered culture. Cultural rehabilitation was facilitated by the resilience of the Acadian society itself, the numerical superiority of the immigrants in their respective districts, and by the residential propinquity of the immigrants in their waterfront communities. Upon arrival in Louisiana, Acadian families were typically granted concession with 4 to 6 arpents (768 to 1,152 feet) frontage on the nearest waterway with a standard depth of 40 arpents (7,680 feet).[37] Forced heirship laws in colonial Louisiana, which required equitable distribution of property among heirs (and Acadian families were consistently large) upon the demise of landholding parents, quickly reduced the original family land grants to narrow ribbons of property. By 1800, many, if not most, individual tracts measured less than 1 arpent frontage by 40 arpents depth.[38] Forced heirship initially worked to preserve Acadian culture by increasing the population density in the original settlement sites at a time when the trickle of non-Acadian immigration into the area threatened to grow into a torrent. Indeed, by the dawn of the nineteenth century, the Acadian community east of the Atchafalaya River consisted of an almost uninterrupted chain of small farmsteads

extending along two axis from the lower Lafourche to upper West Baton Rouge Parish, and from upper West Baton Rouge Parish to the St. James-St. John Parish boundary.[39]

The residential congestion which helped to preserve Acadian cultural integrity also paradoxically worked to transform their imported culture. Though the Acadians constituted at least a plurality in their original settlement sites, the New Acadia districts were by no means their exclusive domains.[40] In the Attakapas and neighboring Opelousas posts, small bands of Indians and scores of Creoles and recently discharged French soldiers were well established at the time of the Acadian influx. Moreover, in 1779, the Spanish colonial government established a Malaguenian colony at New Iberia, near the Acadian Fausse Pointe settlement. East of the Atchafalaya River, the Houma and Chitimacha Indians maintained villages in proximity to their Acadian neighbors at Cabannoce and St. Gabriel, while, in the 1770s and early 1780s, many Creoles from the densely populated German Coast area above New Orleans joined the Acadians in their quest for lands along Bayou Lafourche.[41] Islesño colonists recruited in the Canary Islands by the colonial government found homes in the predominately Acadian Lafourche and Iberville districts in 1779. A final cultural element was introduced in the Acadian settlements in the late 1770s and 1780s as surprisingly large numbers of exiles began to acquire Negro slaves, first as wet nurses and later as field hands.[42]

The various components of New Acadia's polyglot population did not coexist harmoniously: Acadians resented the social pretensions of their Creole neighbors, who, in turn, were appalled by the exiles' lack

of deference to the social position of the longer-established residents.[43] The Houma Indians, on the other hand, were deeply offended by the gonernment's decision to settle the Acadians on their tribal lands, and they vented their frustration by almost daily raids on the immigrants' barnyards and grain stores throughout the 1770s and early 1780s.[44] Finally, African bondsmen chafed under the new slave regime and reportedly gave their enthusiastic support to an abortive serville insurrection at the Lafourche district in 1785.[45]

These mutual animosities notwithstanding, the rival groups in the Acadian settlements were compelled by local demography, economics, and topography to interact on a daily basis. This was particularly true of the Acadian settlements east of the Atchafalaya River. Whereas the western Acadians (those in Attakapas and Opelousas) could--and many did--escape the intercultural feuding by seeking the isolation of the uninhabited prairies adjoining their bayou homes, the eastern Acadians were confined by swampy backlands to narrow natural levees along the waterfront. Forced to reside ever closer to their non-Acadian neighbors by the increasing congestion in the area, the eastern Acadians and those exiles remaining along Bayou Teche gradually found themselves adopting innovations in cuisine and material culture introduced by their neighbors. The so-called "Creole" house (a raised structure on piers) replaced the Acadian maison de poteaux-en-terre by the 1780's; horseracing, introduced into South Louisiana by a handful of Anglo-American immigrants in the 1780s, was almost immediately preempted by the Attakapas Acadians; the Spanish guitar was adapted to Acadian music and Iberian spices entered the formerly bland Acadian

cuisine apparently in the late eighteenth century; by 1803, Indian corn and African okra found their way into the Acadian diet, though in dishes (pain de maïs, soupe de maïs, gumbo, etc.) only remotely resembling their African and Indian counterparts; and, by 1810, a majority of Acadians owned slaves, in emulation of their Creole neighbors.[46] Indeed, cross-cultural borrowing existed to such an extent that, by the time of the Louisiana Purchase (1803), the basis for a new synthetic South Louisiana culture had been laid.

FOOTNOTES

1. Robert Leblanc, "The Acadian Migrations", Proceedings of the Minnesota Academy of Science, XXX (1962), pp. 55-9; Naomi Griffiths, "Acadians in Exile: The Experiences of the Acadian in the British Seaports", Acadiensis, IV (1974), pp.67-84; Naomi Griffiths, "Petitions of Acadian Exiles, 1755-1785: A Neglected Source", Histoire Sociale/Social History, XI (1978); Lawrence Henry Gipson, The British Empire Before the American Revolution, 15 vols. (New York, 1946-1970), VI, 306-15.

2. Carl A. Brasseaux's "The Founding of New Acadia: Reconstuction and Transformation of Acadian Society in Louisiana, 1765-1865" (these de doctorat, 3e cycle, Universite de Paris, 1982) constitutes a first step toward a comprehensive view of the Acadian wanderings. For more narrowly focused studies of Acadian immigration and settlement, see Robert LeBlanc, "The Acadian Migrations", Proceedings of the Minnesota Academy of Science, XXX (1962), pp.55-9; James H. Dormon, The People Called Cajuns: An Introduction to an Ethnohistory (Lafayette, La.: Center for Louisiana Studies, 1983); Jacqueline K Voorhies, "The Acadians: The Search for the Promised Land", in Glenn R. Conrad, ed., The Cajuns: Essays on Their History and Culture (Lafayette, La.: USL History Series, 1978), 97-114.

3. See Carl A. Brasseaux's "The Colonial Records Collection of the Center for Louisiana Studies", Louisiana History, XXV (Spring, 1984), 181-188. Other major collections exist at Loyola University (New Orleans), the University of Texas (Austin), and the University of Florida (Gainesville).

4. For an excellent example of this, see Marc de Villiers du Terrage, Les Dernières Années de la Louisiane française, translated by Hosea Phillips, edited by Carl A. Brasseaux and Glenn R. Conrad, annotated by Carl A. Brasseaux (Lafayette, La., 1982), pp. 211, 274. [The original, French-language edition, entitled Les Dernières Années de la Louisiane française was published in Paris in 1903.]

5. Joe Grey Taylor, Louisiana: A Bicentennial History (New York, 1976), pp. 24-5; Garnie W. McGinty, A History of Louisiana (New York, 1949), pp.60-64; Francois-Xavier Martin, The History of Louisiana form the Earliest Period, 3rd ed. (1882; reprint ed., New Orleans, 1963), pp. 187-188.

6. See, for example, Lillian C. Bourgeois, Cabanocey: The History, Customs, and Folklore of St. James Parish (New Orleans, 1957), p.11.

7. Brasseaux, "New Acadia", pp. 158, 205-06.

8. Jacqueline K. Voorhies, comp., Some Late Eighteenth Century Louisianians (Lafayette, La., 1973), pp.114-119; Janet Jehn, comp., Acadian Exiles in the Colonies (Covington, Ky., 1977).

9. There were initially 193 Acadian immigrants, but by April 1765, their number had grown to 231. Denis-Nicolas Foucault to Minister of Marine Choiseul, Feb. 28, 1765. Archives Nationales, Paris, France, Archives des Colonies (hereinafter AC), subseries C 13a (Louisiane: correspondance generale), volume 45, folio 12.

10. Gabriel Debien, "Les Acadiens a Saint-Domingue", in Glenn R. Conrad, ed., The Cajuns: Essays on Their History and Culture (Lafayette, La., 1978), p. 262.

11. Brasseaux, "New Acadia", pp. 71-74.

12. Thomas B. Akins, ed., Acadia and Nova Scotia: Documents Relating to the Acadian French and the First British Colonization of the Province, 1714-1758 (Cottonport, La., 1972 [1889]), pp. 349-350.

13. Ibid.

14. Brasseaux, "New Acadia", p. 159.

15. Foucault to Choiseul, Feb. 25, 1765. C 13a, vol.45, folio 42, AC.

16. Carl A. Brasseaux, "L'Officier de Plume: Denis-Nicolas Foucault, commissaire-ordonnateur of French Louisiana, 1762-1769" (M.A. thesis, University of Southwestern Louisiana, 1975), pp. 27, 37, 61, 62, 64.

17. List of provisions and supplies delivered to the Acadian families who have taken refuge in Louisiana, Apr. 30, 1765. C 13a, vol. 45, folio 30, AC; Charles Philipe Aubry and Foucault to Choiseul, Apr. 30, 1765. AC, C 13a. 45: 21-24; Jacqueline K. Voorhies, trans., "The Attakapas Post: The First Acadian Settlement", Louisiana History, XVII (Winter, 1976), 91-6.

18. "Copie d'un vieux registre de St. Martin de Tours" (typescript of the oldest church registers, St. Martin de Tours Catholic Church, St. Martinville, Louisiana), pp. 1-3; Attakapas General Census, Oct. 30, 1774, Archivo National de Indies, Seville, Spain, Papeles Procendentes de Cuba (hereinafter PPC), legajo 218.

19. Antonio de Ulloa to Jeronimo de Grimaldi, May 19, 1766, Archivo General de Indias, Seville, Spain, Audiencia de Santo Domingue (hereinafter ASD), legajo 2585, non paginated.

20. Henty Jeringham to Ulloa, Nov. 1766, in Lawrence Kinnard, ed., Spain in the Mississippi Valley, 1765-1794, 3 vols. (Washington, D.C., 1946), II, 36-7.

21. Ulloa to Grimaldi, Sept. 29, 1766, ASD, 2585: n.p.; Aubry to Ulloa, Dec. 16, 1766, legajo 187A, non-paginated, PPC; Richard E. Chandler, trans. and ed., "End of an Odyssey: Acadians Arrive in St. Gabriel, Louisiana", Louisiana History, XIV (Winter, 1973), 81-7; Ulloa to Grimaldi, July 23, 1767, legajo 2585, n.p., ASD; Pedro Piernas to Ulloa, June 5, 1767, legajo 187A: n.p., PPC.

22. Ulloa to Grimaldi, May 19, 1766, legajo 2585: n.p., ASD.

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid.

25. Richard E. Chandler, trans. and ed., "Odessey Continued: Acadians Arrive in Natchez", Louisiana History, XIX (Fall, 1978), 447; Chandler, trans. and ed., "End of an Odessey", 81-87.

26. Ulloa, "Observations", 1769. C 13a, vol. 47, folios 121-121vo, AC.

27. David Ker Texada, Alejandro O'Reilly and the New Orleans Rebels (Lafayette, La., 1970), pp. 88-89.

28. Carl A. Brasseaux and Richard E. Chandler, "The Britian Incident, 1768-1770: Anglo-Hispanic Tensions in the Western Gulf", Southwestern Quarterly, 87 (April, 1984), 357-370.

29. Minister of Marine Praslin to Mistral, Sept. 13, 1766. Archives Nationales, Paris, France, Archives des Colonies, Subseries B (ordres du foi), volume 125, folio 450 vo.

30. Memoir on Acadian History to 1778, June 1778. Archives Nationales, Paris, France, Archives des Affaires etrangeres subseries, volume 47, folio 23.

31. Praslin to Mistral, Sept. 13, 1766. B vol. 125, folio 450 vo, AC.

32. Mathe Allain, trans., "The Records of Belle-Isle-en-Mer", Attakapas Gazette, XVI (1981), 103-110; XVII (1982), 36-45, 76-83, 123-131, 183-192; XVIII (1983), 73-80, 108-113.

33. On the 1785 Acadian migration to Louisiana, see Oscar W. Winzerling, Acadian Odessey (Baton Rouge, La., 1955).

34. Brasseaux, "New Acadia", p. 215.

35. Ibid.

36. Anselme Blanchard to Carondelet, Oct. 28, 1794, PPC, 209: 356.

37. Ulloa to Grimaldi, May 19, 1766, legajo 2585: n.p., ASD.

38. U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1810 Census of Louisiana, St. James, Ascension, Assumption and Lafourche parishes; Brasseaux, "New Acadia", p. 381.

39. 1810 Census of Louisiana, St. James, Ascension, Assumption and Lafourche parishes.

40. Voorhies, comp., Louisianians, pp. 271-345, 441-448.

41. Brasseaux, "New Acadia", pp. 190-237; Gilbert C. Din, "Proposals and Plans for Colonization in Spanish Louisiana", Louisiana History, XI (Summer, 1970), 197-213; and "Spain's Immigration Policy and Efforts in Louisiana During the American Revolution", Louisiana Studies, XIV (Summer, 1975), 241-258.

42. By 1810, a majority of Acadian farmers along the Mississippi River and Bayou Teche were slaveholders. 1810 Census, Attakapas, St. James, Ascension, and Iberville parishes.

43. Carl A. Brasseaux, "Acadians, Creoles, and the 1787 Lafourche Smallpox Outbreak", Louisiana Review, VII (Summer, 1979), 55-8.

44. Judice to Miro, May 26, 1785, legajo 198A, folios 411-12. PPC.

45. Judice to Miro, Nov. 15, 1785, legajo 198A, folio 462, PPC; Judice to Miro, NOv. 13, 1785, legajo 198A, folios 455-58, PPC.

46. Brasseaux, "New Acadia", pp. 238-95; U.S. Bureau of the Census, Third Decennial Census, 1810, Louisiana Schedules.

ACADIANS, CAJUNS, CREOLES, AND BEYOND

Carl A. Brasseaux

Outsiders have consistently viewed Louisiana's French community as a monolithic body, a local variant of the "they-all-look-the-same-to-me" syndrome. Louisiana Francophones, on the other hand, have always been aware that the French community is divided into easily distinguishable groups, but the basis for these divisions has been poorly understood, primarily because of the recent (post 1950's trend) toward amalgamation of several groups into a "Cajun" synthesis. This brief article will therefore attempt to cut through the confusion and identify the major demographic components of the French community and to discuss briefly the factors that have led to the rise of a new synthetic, French-based culture.

Acadians

French-speaking natives of Nova Scotia who were forcibly expelled from their homeland by the British in 1755. After at least one decade of wandering, they settled in south Louisiana and attempted to recreate life as they had known it in the land of their birth. In the decades following their arrival in Louisiana, they gradually absorbed their non-Acadian neighbors. For example, the Malagueño Spaniards who were settled at New Iberia, La., by the colonial administration in 1779 were assimilated by their French-speaking neighbors by the second decade of the nineteenth century.

Rival cultural groups were consistently absorbed by the Acadians through intermarriage. An examination of the south Louisiana church records reveals that, during the first hundred years of its existence in Louisiana, the Acadian community maintained remarkably static marriage patterns: the men almost exclusively married within the group (at least until the antebellum period, when rich Acadians tended to marry outside of the group), while ten-to-fifteen percent of all Acadian brides married non-Acadians. The relatively small number of outsiders thus entering the Acadian community were quickly overwhelmed both by force of numbers and by the determination of their wives to raise their children as Acadians. It was through this means that the Romero, McGee, Domengeaux, Obrien, Burleigh, Quatrevingt, and scores of other non-Acadian families came to identify themselves as "Cajuns".

Cajuns

The term "Cajun" is an indirect corruption of "Acadien," the French equivalent of "Acadian". Records in Spain's Archivo General de Indias indicate that the French in Louisiana had begun to refer to the Acadian exiles as "'Cadiens" by 1771; this corruption has remained in general usage in Louisiana French to the present. In the nineteenth century, Anglo-American immigrants to Louisiana further corrupted "'Cadien" into "Cajun".

In the twentieth century, the term "Cajun" has undergone yet another transformation, becoming the euphemistic term for those persons who participated in South Louisiana's French-based culture. Over the past century, the very distinct class and cultural boundaries between

Louisiana's primary French-speaking groups was eroded through intermarriage between members of rival cultures; the increasing cultural and economic diversification within the Acadian community; the rapid postbellum decline of the Creole aristocracy; and the growing tendency for outsiders to identify the poor Creoles as Cajuns. The territory seceding from St. Landry Parish in 1910, for example, was christened Evangeline Parish in honor of its supposed Acadian heritage, but the overwhelming majority of its white inhabitants were actually Creole descendants of French soldiers who were stationed at Fort Toulouse (present-day Montgomery, Alabama) and who migrated to the Opelousas post in 1764.

Creoles

The term "Creole" has come to mean just about anything to anyone. From an historical perspective the term has meant different things at different times. For a more complete discussion of this term and its various applications throughout the course of Louisiana history, see this writer's article on Creoles.

The "Foreign French"

The last major element in Louisiana's French community is composed of the descendants of the thousands of French émigrés who fled persecution in their homeland following the many political upheavals that punctuated the nineteenth century. While no study of this influx exists, it is certain that the number of nineteenth century immigrants

to Louisiana--popularly known as the "Foreign French"--numbered in the tens of thousands. Although the number of Foreign French easily eclipses the corresponding number of native Acadians and Creoles, their cultural impact upon French Louisiana was minimal.

The Foreign French were usually members of the French bourgeoisie, and economic success was far more important to them than their cultural heritage. They consequently quickly became bilingual in order to compete in the increasingly Anglo-American dominated realm of Louisiana business and, though the immigrants themselves would continue to celebrate Bastille Day until World War I, their children, like children of other nineteenth century immigrants throughout the United States, divested themselves of their inherited cultural baggage as quickly as possible. By the dawn of this century, these second generation Foreign French had moved into the Anglo-American mainstream.

FROM ACADIAN TO CAJUN: THE METAMORPHOSIS OF ACADIAN CULTURE IN COLONIAL LOUISIANA

Carl A. Brasseaux

The Acadian migration to Louisiana occurred after it had become obvious to the exiles that they would never be repatriated to their homeland. The Acadians, now dispersed throughout the western world, feverishly sought a new homeland in which they could reunite their families and reestablish their pre-dispersal way of life. They found such a haven in Spanish Louisiana, where, though confronted by an alien environment, surrounded by culturally dissimilar Creoles, Africans and Indians, and governed by unsympathetic Spaniards, successive waves of Acadian immigrants did indeed resurrect Acadia on the bayous, but the New Acadia that they created bore distinct Louisiana markings.

The metamorphosis of Acadian society in Louisiana was necessitated by environmental factors. Thrust into the wilderness, the Acadian immigrants, like Louisiana's first European settlers, the Creoles, initially sought to impose upon the lower Mississippi Valley's subtropical environment the economic and agricultural regimes of their homeland, and, in Opelousas at least, attempted to cultivate wheat. Unlike the Creoles who, for decades, attempted unsuccessfully to produce wheat, the Acadians demonstrated far greater flexibility and adaptability. Profiting by the Creoles' mistakes, this pragmatic people quickly adopted time-proven Louisiana agricultural practices and crops. So successful was this metamorphosis that, within ten years of their arrival, most of the exiles attained a standard of living at

least equal to that of pre-dispersal Nova Scotia. In 1777, for example, the typical Acadian resident of Ascension Parish owned 14.7 cattle, 11.59 hogs, and 1.03 sheep. These figures compare favorably with the corresponding figures--12.7 cattle, 8.95 hogs, and 12.04 sheep--enumerated in the 1701 census of Mines, the last pre-dispersal census for the area from which most of the Acadian immigrants of the late 1760s were drawn. When one considers that the void created by the dearth of sheep was filled by large flocks of chickens (22.2 in the average Acadian household in 1772), the median livestock holdings in New Acadia were at least on a par with those of vieille Acadie.[1]

The exiles achieved a uniform level of prosperity despite the emergence of divergent agricultural pursuits on a subregional basis. This economic diversity reflected the agrarian heritage of the Acadian settlers. Most Attakapas Acadians (77.7 percent), for example, were former residents of the Chignecto area, a sparsely wooded sea marsh and prairie which, for a half-century before the Grand Derangement, had supported small cattle ranches.[2]

Husbandry was the very foundation of the Chignecto economy, and, as early as 1707, the area boasted forty-two ranches. Though chronically neglected, the herds multiplied rapidly, providing the ranchers with large surpluses by the early eighteenth century. In the mid-1740s, the provincial government reported that the Acadians were smuggling 600-700 cattle--primarily Beaubassin beeves--to the neighboring French settlements on île St. Jean and Cape Breton Island.[3]

In view of their background, it is hardly surprising that the 1765

Acadian immigrants, the leaders of whom were drawn exclusively from the Chignecto Isthmus, selected homesites in South Louisiana's prime grasslands and immediately engaged in ranching. These cattlemen quickly adapted traditional ranching techniques to their new environment, and, though their cattle continued to graze unoccupied lands in the royal domain without constant supervision, the Acadians nevertheless vigorously protected their livestock from the roving herds of wild cattle which could easily assimilate their semi-domesticated longhorns. Ranchers also quickly utilized horses, which had been scarce in Nova Scotia and which had been employed primarily as draft animals, to trace the movements of their cattle in the broad expanses of the Southwestern Prairies. Finally, to discourage rustling in their area, the exiles embraced, and actively promoted, the use of cattle brands.[4]

The Acadians' skill as animal husbandrymen, the fecundity of their cattle, the lushness of verdant grasslands in the Attakapas district, and the region's mild climate, which extended the life span of weak and aged cattle, interacted to produce a remarkable growth rate among the Acadian herds. By 1771, only six years after their arrival as destitute immigrants, the Attakapas ranchers owned an average of twenty-two cattle and six horses--approximately twice the corresponding livestock holdings in the last extant, predispersal Chignecto census. This comparison is placed in proper perspective only when one considers that the foregoing Nova Scotian population count reflected over thirty-five years of development in the Beaubassin cattle industry. Median Attakapas livestock holdings rose steadily throughout the late

eighteenth century, despite the ranchers' renewed interest in marketing their cattle. In fact, by 1803, Acadian livestock production had increased by at least 500 percent, and, in the Quartier de Vermilion alone, the average Acadian vacherie included 125 cattle and twenty-three horses.[5]

Faced with the difficulty of managing large herds with only the family labor pool, the prairie Acadians quickly resumed the practice of driving surplus beef to the nearest outlet. In 1773, Amant Broussard and Pierre Broussard, assisted by eight or nine drovers, began driving small herds of cattle to New Orleans. Following the Collet Trail along Bayou Teche, and the Bayou Black and Bayou Lafourche natural levees, the Acadian cowboys initially guided only Creole-owned beef--usually in herds of 100 to 150 head--to the Crescent City slaughterhouse, but, following Spain's belated entrance in the American Revolution (1779), the few surplus beeves on Acadian vacheries were also driven to market. By maintaining this crucial supply line to the colonial capital during the war, the Acadian ranchers and drovers not only prevented food shortages in New Orleans, but also provided vital logistical support to the Spanish army during Bernardo de Galvez's Baton Rouge, Mobile, and Pensacola campaigns which ended the British presence along the Gulf Coast.[6]

The trade patterns established during the American Revolution persisted for over a half-century. The Acadian percentage of cattle shipped to New Orleans, however, rose sharply as the prairie herds proliferated in the 1780s and 1790s. In 1781, for example, the Attakapas post was shipping approximately 150 cattle to New Orleans

each month, but the Acadians apparently contributed only 10 to 20 percent of these herds. But, in the mid-to-late 1780s, the Acadian contribution to the New Orleans supply shipments increased substantially as ranchers, such as Francois Broussard, Pierre Broussard, Olivier Thibodeau, Fermin Breau, and Pierre Dugas, were ordered to ship their rapidly expanding beef surpluses to the colonial capital. Despite their changing role in the Louisiana cattle industry, the exiles remained predominate as did cattle drovers in the late eighteenth century.[7]

The primary economic role of ranching in the Attakapas and Opelousas posts should not obscure the existence of a complementary subsistence farming system. As in Beaubassin, where the rise of the cattle industry had produced a corresponding decline in the region's cultivated acreage, Attakapas ranchers grew progressively smaller quantities of corn, vegetables, and cotton. These commodities, produced solely for home consumption, balanced with the fruits of husbandry, provided the prairie Acadians with all of the resources necessary for life dans les savannes.[8]

While agriculture played only a secondary role in the economic development of the prairie Acadian settlements, it was the very foundation of the Acadian Coast and upper Lafourche Valley economies. Except for the 1765 immigrants established at Cabannoce (who were predominately Cobequid natives), the Acadians settled by the French caretaker and Spanish colonial governments along the Mississippi River were drawn primarily from one Nova Scotian district--Mines and its component villages of Grand Pre and Pisiquid.[9] At St. Gabriel in

present-day Iberville Parish, for example, 83.3 percent of the settlers were natives of Grand Pré and Pisiquid. At San Luis de Natchez, Mines area natives resided in 95.8 of the local Acadian households. In pre-dispersal Nova Scotia, Mines, lining the southern littoral of the Minas Basin, had been the colonial breadbasket. Renowned for their fine apple orchards, the Mines farmers also generally cultivated vegetables, oats, rye, and wheat on five to ten arpents of reclaimed sea marsh. The diminutive fields belied the farms' productivity, and the farmers usually produced grain surpluses for export to New England smugglers at Baie Verte.[10]

The Mines agricultural tradition was perpetuated along the Mississippi River by the Grand Pré and Pisiquid Acadians who came to Louisiana between 1766 and 1768 from exile in Maryland. In opening the Acadian Coast and upper Lafourche Valley to cultivation, the immigrant farmers had to overcome three rather formidable obstacles: First, the most fertile land in the riverbottom farms lay near the waterfront which was invariably blanketed by dense thickets of hardwood timber, usually live oaks. Clearing the land in Louisiana's debilitatingly warm and humid climate without the assistance of slaves, oxen, and, in many instances, proper tools proved to be a painstakingly slow process. The land-clearing problem was compounded by the Acadians' unfamiliarity with "slash and burn" deforestation techniques, for, in Acadia, particularly in the Mines area, settlers had traditionally shunned woodlands, preferring reclaimed sea marsh which required no clearing. Indeed, by 1750, only 500 acres of woodland had been cleared by pre-dispersal Acadians, while over 13,000 acres of sea marsh had

been reclaimed from the Bay of Fundy. The exiles nevertheless met this challenge with characteristic industry and determination--frequently working themselves to the point of complete physical exhaustion--and their lands exhibited slow, but steady improvement. By the early 1770s, the average Acadian farmer in the river settlements had cleared and cultivated at least two arpents--the minimum necessary for Spanish land patents--and had managed to produce at least seventy barrels of corn. In addition, inventories of Acadian estates indicate that an additional six to thirty arpents had been enclosed with cypress pieux fences.[11]

Land improvement operations were often interrupted by the demands of levee and road construction and maintenance. Although infrequently subjected to corvees, forced-labor details on public improvements projects, the Maryland immigrants were nevertheless required, upon settlement, to protect their lands from the annual vernal inundations of the Mississippi River and its distributaries by building five- to six-foot levees. The informal settlement regulations of the 1760s acquired force of law through Governor O'Reilly's 1770 land ordinances which required levee and road maintenance and construction under pain of land grant revocation. O'Reilly's land regulations, which were usually strictly enforced by local commandants, effectively required constant levee maintenance, for the resulting channelization of the lower Mississippi River produced gradually rising water levels and hence the need for ever higher and stronger levees.[12]

Having cleared small sections of land--generally between 2 and 5 arpents by the late 1770s--the Acadian pioneers faced the task of

adapting to Louisiana's long growing season and high annual precipitation levels. Wheat, barley and oats, for example, which had been the principal crops in the Mines area, were unsuited to South Louisiana's subtropical climate, as the immigrants' initial efforts to cultivate them demonstrated. They were thus compelled to cultivate small quantities of maize--a crop virutally unknown in Acadie--provided to them as seed grain by Louisiana's French and, later, Spanish government.[13]

The discovery of a substitute grain, which would serve as the staple of the Acadian diet for over a century, was followed by the adoption of a new fiber-producing plant. Grand Pré farmers had consistently produced small quantities of flax for home consumption. Much of the Acadians' summer clothing had traditionally been fashioned from Grand Pré linen. Flax would not grow well in semitropical Louisiana, and, by 1770, the exiles had discarded this plant fiber. In addition, Acadian winter clothing had been cut from woolen cloth produced by the ubiquitous household spinning wheels and looms. But sheep were scarce in the river settlements in colonial Louisiana, and the immigrants initially lacked the means to purchase them. Only in the late 1770s did significant numbers of Acadians attempt to rebuild their once large sheep herds, but the number of shepherds and the size of their flocks remained consistently small throughout the late eighteenth century.[14]

Thus lacking access to traditional fiber producers, the river Acadians, as well as their Teche Valley cousins, soon learned to produce cotton, which was not only more comfortable than wool, but

which, unlike wool, could be used as a year-round fabric. Unlike flax, cotton was easy to wash and to fashion into thread, and, like wool, could easily be woven into cloth on the looms which reemerged in the immigrant households by the early 1770s.[15]

Louisiana's Acadians quickly mastered cotton cultivation, harvesting, and processing. As early as 1772, Acadians on both sides of the Atchafalaya (but particularly in the river settlements) were utilizing pre-Whitney cotton gins to remove the seeds and facilitate spinning.[16] Cotton threads were woven into broadcloth, and, throughout Louisiana, Acadian cotonade quickly became synonymous with excellence. Acadian cotton stockings, moreover, were of such high quality that they formed part of at least one Spanish governor's wardrobe.

Domestic fiber and grain production was supplemented by the fruits of the family gardens. In Acadia, the principal garden products had been field peas, turnips, and cabbage. Turnips and cabbage, however, could be produced only in Louisiana's short winter season and hence quickly declined in importance. Peas remained a garden staple and were complemented by various bean varieties. In a 1786 report on agriculture in the First Acadian Coast and the upper Lafourche Valley, Louis Judice indicated that field peas, kidney beans, "red beans, butter beans, and English peas" were among the most significant local crops.[17]

Despite their significant role in Acadian agriculture, peas and beans were produced exclusively for domestic consumption. Also produced in small quantities for home use were rice, tobacco, squash and pumpkins. Although the Acadians had been inveterate pipe smokers

from the outset of French colonization in Acadia (a trait they borrowed from their Micmac neighbors), seventeenth and eighteenth century travel accounts suggest that they themselves produced little, if any tobacco and apparently acquired this commodity by barter from local Indians. Perhaps because of poor Acadian-Indian relations in Louisiana, the river Acadians began cultivating small quantities of tobacco by the mid-1770s.[18]

As with tobacco, rice was cultivated as a secondary crop, particularly by the river Acadians. Sown in lowlands subject to spring flooding, providence rice (so named because of its dependence upon rainfall for irrigation) was used primarily as an insurance crop to provide the farmers with grain in years, such as 1785, when the South Louisiana corn crop failed. In the absence of necessary irrigation technology, rice remained a marginal crop, a fact perhaps best demonstrated by the fact that in 1788, only 4 of the 276 Acadian households enumerated in the Lafourche census produced the grain in appreciable quantities.[19]

Despite their notable lack of success with rice, the Acadians continued to experiment with subtropical crops throughout the late eighteenth century and, by 1804, small quantities of okra were produced in river settlement farms. This African vegetable, brought to Louisiana from West Africa via the West Indies, was probably introduced to the eastern Acadian communities by slaves acquired by river and Lafourche Valley Acadians in the late 1790s.[20]

The remarkable diversity of Acadian agricultural production was not

restricted to row crops. The Grand Pre and Port Royal tradition of maintaining small orchards persisted, but the component apple trees were replaced by figs, peaches, and apricots.[21]

In addition, by the 1780s, many river and upper Lafourche Acadians tended Concord, white, and muscadine grape vines.

Adapting to the plethora of orchard and agricultural products which the river Acadians encountered in Louisiana proved no easy task.[22] The evolution of Acadian agriculture was further complicated by the radically different planting techniques demanded by row crops, new insect pests, and longer growing seasons. Finally, Acadian farmers were forced to utilize technology for neutralizing the baneful effects of Louisiana's high precipitation levels.

The most effective weapon in the war against flooding was the plow, a tool with which the Acadian immigrants were not very familiar. Until the early eighteenth century, plows were quite rare in Acadia, and wheat and other cereal crops were sown by broadcasting seed. Even in the mid-eighteenth century, ox-drawn, wooden plows enjoyed only limited use, and furrows were seldom more than two or three inches deep. In Louisiana, such small furrows were incapable of handling the region's torrential rains, and crops were exposed to frequent, extended flooding and the resulting root rot. Hence, river and upper Lafourche Acadians quickly acquired oxen and apparently learned to cut deeper furrows.[23]

The flooding problem was also alleviated by the effective use of ditches. In 1770, Acadian farmers were directed by the colonial government to build and maintain drainage systems on their habitations.[24] The immigrants generally complied, with gratifying

results. Throughout the decade, production levels increased and, by the mid-1770s, the typical Acadian river parish farmer produced annually thirty barrels of surplus corn.

Surpluses soon appeared in other food-producing activities on the exiles' river settlement farms. Upon settlement, the immigrants had been given two cows and seven chickens by the colonial government. Within months of their arrival, the river Acadians also acquired small numbers of hogs--the principal source of protein in their pre-dispersal settlements--probably from slaves in neighboring settlements. The newly acquired hogs and hens proliferated quickly, and, in 1772, the typical Acadian Coast household owned twenty-four pigs and twenty-two fowl. In addition, though the topography and population density militated against cattle herding, the river and eastern bayou Acadians acquired and maintained, by the early 1770s, small numbers of cattle.[25]

Capital for the acquisition of livestock was derived from smuggling. By 1770, the immigrants were seeking markets for their surplus grain, and they found eager buyers in the English merchants at Manchac. For a half-century prior to the Grand Derangement, Grand Pre farmers had bartered wheat and barley for manufactured goods and specie with Boston smugglers at Baie Verte. Despite the lingering memories of the expulsion, this economic system was resuscitated by the Acadians themselves on the banks of the Mississippi, for the exiles soon realized that English Manchac, an east-bank trading post near present-day Baton Rouge, offered a lucrative market for all types of foodstuffs. The high prices fetched by agricultural produce in English

territory were made even more attractive by the Spanish government's long enduring policy of levying artificially low prices on New Orleans-bound, Louisiana-grown goods. The Acadian contribution to this contraband traffic persisted and even expanded in the 1770s, despite increasingly stringent measures taken by the colonial regime to divert all Louisiana produce to the Crescent City. Travelling by night in pirogus and eluding Spanish guards at Fort St. Gabriel by coasting along the west bay smugglers carried "eggs, milk, pork, and corn" to English Manchac, where these commodities were bartered for manufactured items--particularly cast-iron tools--which were in constant demand in South Louisiana's frontier society. Though the flow of contraband dwindled in the mid-1770s as a result of flood damage to crops, this illicit trade pattern persisted until the American Revolution, when Spanish forces captured British West Florida and annexed the province to Louisiana. River Acadians then, like their prairie cousins, began shipping to New Orleans their produce--corn and ever increasing surpluses of corn-fed hogs.[26]

The Acadian eagerness to engage in business with their recent oppressors bears testimony to their pragmatism and business acumen. The contraband trade proved more lucrative than government-regulated intracolonial commerce, and thus the immigrants simply pursued their own interests. Similarly, despite chronically poor Acadian-Creole relations throughout the late eighteenth century, stemming from boundary disputes and conflicting world views, the Western Acadians regularly worked as cattle drovers for the Creole cattle barons. Cattle drives through Louisiana swamps and mosquito-infested forests

were physically taxing and dangerous, and the drovers were well paid, usually sufficient funds to stock their own small vacheries with a few cattle. Thus, with such monetary incentives, the Acadians effectively suppressed their burning enmity toward their present and former oppressors, and, only during heated civil disputes and at Spain's declaration of war against England in 1779, did the exiles permit their true feelings to surface.[27]

The pragmatism evidenced in the Acadians' business dealings was also manifested in the adaptability of Acadian cuisine, costume, and architecture to new materials and climatic conditions. Age-old Acadian cooking techniques remained fundamentally unaltered throughout the late eighteenth century, despite radical changes in the immigrants' diet. In Acadia, the diet had revolved around the seasonal fruits of agriculture, fishing and hunting. During the spring and summer months, wild game and fish provided settlers a steady source of protein, while the ubiquitous family gardens yielded peas, and a large variety of other vegetables.[28]

In autumn, surplus livestock--particularly hogs--were slaughtered, and, while some beef and pork was consumed immediately, most of the meat was salted for use during the approaching winter months. Seventeenth and eighteenth century observers consistently reported the Acadian affinity for salt pork, noting that the Bay of Fundy area settlers preferred bacon to wild game, including such delicacies as partridges.[29]

The autumnal butchery was merely the first stage of the Acadians' crucial fall food-gathering system. In September, farmers harvested

wheat, barley and rye and transported their grain to local mills for grinding. Turnips and cabbages, staples of the winter diet, also matured in autumn, but only the turnips were harvested and stored in cellars. Cabbages were "refrigerated" in snow-covered fields until gathered in small amounts for immediate consumption. Finally, apples and spruce sprouts were stored in cellars for winter consumption, a portion of the apple crop was diverted into cider production. Cider, however, enjoyed only moderate popularity among the pre-dispersal Acadians, who clearly preferred spruce-sprout beer, a noted Canadian anti-scourbutic.[30]

Despite the variety of foods available to them, the Bay of Fundy-area Acadians generally prepared their meals with two basic cooking techniques--boiling and frying. These methods of cooking were dictated both by the widespread use of black, cast-iron cauldrons and the heavy consistency of the component foods in the Acadian diet. Salt pork required extensive boiling, as did most wild game and the shellfish gathered in tidal pools during the spring months. Most Acadian vegetables also required cooking in boiling water, particularly turnips and cabbage which were often cooked together in an extremely popular soup, a pre-dispersal delicacy, during the winter months.[31]

Unlike the staples of the Acadian diet, the gaspereau and shad, which served as an important secondary source of protein, required less cooking, but higher temperatures. Hence, fish were usually fried in oil, probably bear oil, much to the chagrin of French travellers, because butter was practically unknown in Acadia.[32]

Just as frying was restricted to fish, so was baking restricted to

bread. Whole wheat or mixed-grain bread was served at major meals, according to eighteenth-century observers, and the loaves were inevitably consumed with molasses and locally produced maple syrup.[33] But the major ingredients for this Acadian delicacy were scarce and often unavailable in Louisiana, forcing the immigrants to substitute locally grown products. Corn bread thus quickly replaced whole wheat on Acadian tables, and, by the early nineteenth century, the yellow cakes were often eaten with cane syrup.[34]

The flexibility of Acadian baking techniques was also evidenced in other facets of Acadian cuisine. Because turnips and cabbage were quite rare in New Acadia settlements, Acadian cooks quickly incorporated other locally grown vegetables and ingredients into their traditional winter soups. The result was soupe de mais and, later, file gumbo.

The emergence of gumbo in the Acadians' culinary repertoire represents a new departure in Acadian cuisine, for it reflects the melding of cooking techniques developed by Franco-American, Indian and African cultures. Thrust into a small geographical area with little mobility, the white, red, and black residents of South Louisiana were forced to interact on a daily basis, and, although these confrontations were often unpleasant, all of the participating groups were inevitably influenced by the neighboring cultures. This is particularly true of upwardly mobile Acadians and their African slaves.[35]

The vast majority of Louisiana Acadians acquired one-to-three slaves between 1790 and 1810, and these black laborers imparted elements of their cuisine and diet to their new masters. The most

important element in this cultural interchange was okra, an African vegetable introduced to Louisiana by blacks via the West Indies. By 1804, Acadian gumbo featured okra, at least on the Acadian Coast. The black contribution to Cajun was not limited to the prolific green vegetable. The ragu sauces now associated with Cajun cuisine bear striking resemblance to those of French West Africa and were perhaps also introduced into South Louisiana by slave cooks.[36]

Such delicacies as gumbo were reserved for special occasions and weekend social gatherings, and they broke the monotony of the Acadian pioneers' mundane daily fare all too infrequently. Although no late eighteenth century description of Acadian cuisine exists, evidence suggests that the typical meal consisted of salt pork, corn bread, and seasonal vegetables and fruits. Rice was consumed only rarely and then in small quantities, except in years when the corn crop failed. The steady diet of salt pork was frequently interrupted by eggs and wild game bagged by farmer-hunters on their winter hunting expeditions. These hunting trips probably yielded wild ducks and venison, though scanty extant archival evidence suggests that, then as now, few species were spared the hunters' onslaught. A less common protein substitute was poultry, because eggs constituted an important link in the Acadian food chain. Hens were slaughtered only when they had grown old and unproductive.[37]

The toughness of the old hens, wild game, and stringy longhorn beef, as well as the necessity of purging salt from the cured pork, dictated the perpetuation of pre-dispersal cooking techniques. As in Acadia, most major meals were prepared primarily by boiling. The

typical eighteenth-century Acadian household consequently contained several cast-iron cauldrons, suggesting that meat and green vegetables--primarily beans and peas--were prepared separately.[38]

Spanish-period Acadian households also consistently contained only one frying pan, and, as the name suggests, these cooking utensils were undoubtedly used to fry eggs, bacon, and fresh water fish. But, if late nineteenth and early twentieth century practice is any indication, the frying pan also frequently doubled as a baking pan for cornbread.[39]

The remarkable adaptability of Acadian cuisine to Louisiana's agricultural products was shared by the Acadian capacity to harmonize their costume with Gulf Coast climatic conditions. Faced with bitterly cold winters and very cool weather during most of the spring and autumn months, Acadian men and women wore woolen garments, often dyed red and black. In Louisiana, sheep were not only scarce in the nascent Acadian settlements, but woolen garments were also impractical in all but the very coldest winter days. Acadian women thus quickly learned to substitute cotton for wool, and, by 1772, cotton had become a major crop in Acadian Coast and Teche Valley settlements.[40]

Production of cotton cloth became the principal Acadian cottage industry by 1810. Raw cotton was either cleaned by hand, or fed through pre-Whitney cotton gins, which were quite common in late eighteenth century Louisiana, and the processed fiber was then spun by women into thread. The resulting spools of thread were then mounted on the ubiquitous household looms and woven into cottonade. This rough fabric, which was usually left in its natural state or dyed indigo blue

(though other colors were used less frequently), was then fashioned into clothing for the entire family: pants, garde-soleils, shirts, blouses, carmagnolles, dresses, and floor-length skirts.[41]

Woolen stockings, an integral part of the male and female costume in pre-dispersal Acadia, were almost completely replaced by their lighter cottonade counterparts. In fact, Acadian cotton stockings were of such fine quality that they formed a part of Governor Luis de Unzaga's wardrobe.[42]

Finally, despite radical environmental changes, Acadian footwear also changed very little in Louisiana. Although the traditional source of shoe leather--moose pelts--was unavailable in Louisiana, Acadians of both sexes continued to wear moccasins as they had in their homeland. Unlike Acadia, use of moccasins in Louisiana was undoubtedly restricted to the winter months. The less common sabots, wooden shoes made with willow wood and worn principally by men and women working in damp environments, particularly on the Acadian dykes or in boats, were impractical in well drained areas with firm soil. They were quickly abandoned by most Acadians in districts not subject to regular flooding, and, by the early nineteenth century, sabots were found only in the flood-prone Lafourche Valley settlements. Like sabots, professionally crafted leather shoes and silver buckles were quite uncommon among Louisiana Acadians, appearing in the succession inventories of only the most affluent farmers and drovers and occasionally in the estates of young bachelors. However commonplace the footwear, it was forsaken during Louisiana's hot and humid spring, summer, and fall months. During these seasons, the exiles--men, women,

and children--went barefoot, even to dances.[43]

Though discarding footwear in summertime afforded some relief from the incessant heat, abandoning headgear most certainly did not. Hats had been an integral part of the pre-dispersal Acadian costume and their design and function changed very little in Louisiana, despite radical changes in some component materials. In order to gird themselves against direct sunlight and chilling winds, women generally draped woolen shawls over their heads and shoulders whenever they ventured out of doors and particularly when working in the fields. In Louisiana, the shawl was replaced by the cotton garde-soleil which, like its woolen predecessor, covered both the shoulders and the head, but which adapted to the region's climate through the insertion of rigid brims and side panels to pull the neck guard away from the scalp and to permit air circulation. Male headgear, on the other hand, required little alteration in Louisiana. As in Acadia, the exiles continued to wear soft felt hats in winter and for formal occasions, and straw hats in spring and summer, especially while laboring in the field. Nineteenth century engravings, however, suggest that the shape of the hats changed slightly in the late eighteenth century, with brims becoming flatter, wider, and more rigid as folk hatters began utilizing palmetto leaves in place of felt.[44]

By the American Revolution, the Acadian immigrants had completely adapted their Canadian wardrobe to the hot and humid Sun Belt. Indeed, by 1776, Acadian succession records reveal remarkable consistency of clothing design throughout South Louisiana, permitting the delineation of the "typical" male and female costumes. Men commonly wore

collarless, loose-fitting cottonade shirts, usually undyed or dyed white. Their knee-length britches were usually dyed indigo blue. Men usually went barefoot, except for formal occasions and cold winter months, when their feet and calves were sheathed in cotton stockings, leather moccasins, and, more rarely, moccasins with leggings. Acadian women generally wore ankle-length, striped cottonade skirts, cotton corsets, and decorative vests above them. Like their husbands, they wore cotton stockings and moccasins only in inclement winter weather.[45]

The styles of clothing worn by Acadians in eighteenth century Louisiana were practically identical to those of vieille Acadie, and this stylistic continuity was another manifestation of the exiles' compulsion to reestablish their traditional way of life in their adopted homeland. The Acadian capacity to resist fundamental change despite the destruction of their insular world was also reflected in the persistence of their frugal and pragmatic values, particularly popular attitudes toward clothing. The numerous stages of clothing production, between the cotton harvest and the fashioning of hand-woven cloth were not only laborious, but also extremely tedious. Garments were thus worn until they literally disintegrated, and Robert Hale's 1731 observation that Acadian "clothes were good eno' but they looked as if they were pitched on with pitchforks" was equally applicable to post-expulsion clothing. Many, if not most of the garments listed in Spanish-period estates were either mauvais (tattered) or usée (threadbare).[46]

The spirit of self-sufficiency and frugality which permeated Acadian

clothing manufacture and use also characterized their architectural philosophy. Pre-dispersal Acadian housing had represented a marriage of traditional European design, Nova Scotian building materials, and Indian technology. Except for a handful of very affluent Port Royal residents who owned two-story wood and masonry homes, little different from those of western France, as well as the most wealthy residents of the outposts, whose homes were three-or-four-room structures of pièce-sur-pièce construction, the vast majority of Acadians lived in one-or-two-room cottages of poteaux-en-terre design.

The focal point of these small rectangular structures was the multipurpose dining and living area. In many homes, this unpartitioned area was also a bedroom, though English traveller Robert Hale indicates that some homes contained separate sleeping quarters. These bedrooms were nothing more than cramped cubicles, "made something after the Manner of a Sailor's Cabbin [sic], but boarded all round about the bigness of the bed." Such architectural luxuries, it should be noted, were exceptional, and, as it would in Louisiana, the typical attic contained a garçonnière (cockloft). The lack of living area in the pre-dispersal Acadian home, which forced the residents to utilize attics as sleeping quarters for young males, created storage problems. Small cellars provided winter storage for agricultural produce, and, as the ground temperatures remained near or below freezing throughout the winter months, the enclosed apples, turnips, and vegetables were preserved by natural refrigeration.[47]

The innovation and pragmatism reflected in the cellars' advantageous use of unfavorable weather conditions was but one benefit produced by indigenous Acadian architecture. In the late seventeenth century,

Acadians experienced
great success in marrying traditional European building methods with Indian home insulation techniques to produce an architectural hybrid best suited to eastern Canada's frigid climate. This amalgam is best reflected in the design of the component poteau-en-terre walls, consisting of posts drawn from the upland woods, which traditionally constituted the "backlands" on coastal farms, and bound together by small branches, an Indian architectural innovation which not only strengthened the wall, but which also created an air pocket for insulation. Once complete, the interior wall was plastered with a mud and clay mixture to create a uniform surface and to seal the interior against blasts of arctic air. The soft insulation was itself protected by weather boards.[48]

These multi-layered walls were not only environmentally sound, but also quite sturdy, for they supported a small garçonnière in the attic in addition to the weight of the main floor, which covered an equally small cellar. To this burden was added a European-style thatch roof of reed and bark construction.

The durability of this architectural motif was also reflected in its use in chimney construction. Indeed, the chimneys differed from the exterior walls only in the use of an interior and an exterior coating of mud plaster to insulate the component posts from sparks.[49]

The poteaux-en-terre house type was brought to Louisiana in the mid-1760s by the New Acadia settlers. Because of its architectural simplicity, it was the first home built by Acadian immigrants along the banks of the Mississippi River and in the Teche and Lafourche valley

settlements. The post-in-ground construction of homes quickly proved defective in the region's warm, moist climate. Because of South Louisiana's unusually high water table, the posts rotted quickly, rendering the walls structurally unsound. In addition, Gulf Coast termites quickly attack and destroy dry wood at ground level. Houses built flush with the ground are also particularly vulnerable to inundations in the broad Louisiana flood plain. Finally, the traditional Acadian house, with its insulated walls and thick thatch roof, was designed to shield its occupants from Nova Scotia's frigid climate and thus undoubtedly proved unbearably hot in the region's sweltering summer months.[50]

The defective structure was quickly modified to meet the Gulf Coast's environmental demands, and, though the poteaux-en-terre houses persisted in New Acadia until the early nineteenth century, it was rapidly superseded by the house type traditionally associated with Louisiana's Acadian population. The Louisiana Acadian house represented a melding of Maritime Canadian, Norman, and West Indian architecture. The exiles adopted the simple lines of the Norman country home, perhaps because many 1785 immigrants had been trained by Norman carpenters while in France. As in the West Indies, the houses were raised on piers, usually large cypress blocks, to permit increased air circulation in warm months as well as increased flood protection. Large parallel doors and windows were introduced to promote cooling of the central living area. Front galleries were incorporated as a cooling mechanism; cypress shingles replaced straw roofing materials to permit the upward radiation of heat from the attic at night; and

above-ground cellars (usually measuring 16 x 20 feet) were established as outbuildings to offset the loss of storage space. Finally, though the floor was supported by massive cypress beams, the traditional walls were necessarily lightened by the removal of most vertical beams. Support timbers were braced by large diagonal posts to which they were bound by peg-and-mortise joints. The walls' resulting internal cavities were filled with a mud-and-moss mixture, called bousillage, as in traditional Acadian architecture. The Acadian chimney remained unchanged.[51]

The metamorphosis of Acadian housing proceeded slowly, but steadily throughout the late eighteenth century. Some West Indian architectural innovations such as galleries and matched windows for cross ventilation, borrowed from Louisiana's well established Creole population, were first adopted by the Opelousas Acadians sometime before 1773. The Michel Cormier house, located near present-day Grand Coteau and built prior to 1773, constituted the initial stage in this evolutionary process, for it embodied features of both the Acadian and French/Creole building traditions. Erected "on ground level" of poteaux-en-terre construction, it featured bousillage walls, an earthen floor, and an encircling gallery. The Cormier house type, however, was clearly not the solution to Acadian housing needs, and the design of the Acadian dwelling continued to change throughout the 1770s and 1780s before emerging in the 1790s as the archetypical Louisiana Acadian house, relicts of which can still be found throughout South Louisiana.[52]

While the evolution of the Acadian house made the structure

increasingly functional, it did not appreciably augment the creature comforts of the occupants. The Acadians' non-materialistic values dictated the persistence of their simple life-style, spartan by modern standards, and, as in Acadia, homes contained only a minimum of furnishings. Visiting an Acadian residence in 1731, Robert Hale found only beds with their attendant storage chests (located at the foot of beds), one table, two or three chairs, and a collection of badly worn earthenware plates and saucers; cups and mugs were extremely rare and also reflected long and continuous usage.[53]

Hale would have found the same furnishings in New Acadia households. Extant Acadian antiques indicate that the design of the furnishings differed only slightly from their pre-dispersal counterparts, but that the Louisiana furniture was constructed of very different materials. Acadian furnishings were usually fashioned from the region's superior cherry wood, while New Acadian furnishings were generally made with softer, more workable cypress lumber. As some exiles gained affuence in the mid-to-late Spanish period, however, imported cherry furniture once again found its way into Acadian households. Modestly wealthy immigrants also acquired, after the 1770s, armoires to replace the small wooden chests which traditionally stored clothing and small valuables. Hollowware and flatware were a final barometer of wealth, as earthenware bowls and broken tin cutlery were replaced by porcelain vessels and iron spoons and forks.[54]

Such luxuries were exceptional, and the average eighteenth century settler sat on a worn-out wooden chair, at a hand-carved table, and ate from chipped dishes, with damaged cutlery. He slept in the same room,

on a feather or straw mattress, in a hand-made cypress bed. At the foot of the bed, he stored his few threadbare garments in a small cypress chest.

This was indeed an unpretentious existence, a rejection of conspicuous consumption which Anglo-American and European travellers usually summarily dismissed as slothfulness.[55] The Acadian ethos was not geared to materialism, but ratherf to the precepts of land and family. The Acadian attachment to the soil is vividly reflected in their agrarian life style and in their very deep attachment to the family estate. From the very establishment of their homeland, Acadians had consistently defended their personal property with ferocious tenacity against all spurious claims. Even the most minor property disputes were brought before the colonial magistrates, particularly after the establishment of English rule in 1713. Local court dockets were perennially cluttered with such complaints, causing Lt. Governor Lawrence Armstrong to lament in 1731 that the Acadians were "a Litigious Sort of people and so ill natur'd to one another, as Daily to Encroach upon their Neighbours' properties, which occasions Continual complaints."[56]

Acadian litigiousness lay dormant in the 1760s as the exiles were preoccupied with the task of developing their frontier settlements. With the first land surveys of the 1770s, however, Louisiana surveyors and colonial administrators were bewildered by the flurry of resulting land disputes. Royal surveyors were sued and extralegally harassed by landowners whose land grants were reduced by the initial surveys, while Acadians and Creoles alike were quick to feel the wrath of their

Acadian neighbors whenever attempting to expropriate cypress timber from isolated cyprières. The latter disputes were usually settled peaceably through legal channels, but victims of livestock encroachment and the resulting crop damage frequently resorted to violent means of redressing their grievances--often indulging in the wholesale destruction of the offending animals.

The intensity and spontaneity of the Acadian defense of property rights is an accurate barometer of land's prominent position in the Acadian hierarchy of values. The Acadian farm was viewed, in every respect, by the proprietors as a personal domain, open only to friends and invited guests. Land boundaries were considered sacrosanct, and intruders were to be repelled at any price. Indeed, the Acadian farm was a sanctuary against a hostile world.

The Acadians' ties to the land were clearly subjugated to family considerations. Isolated in the Nova Scotian frontier, the Acadian pioneers, particularly the 1632 immigrants who shared a common cultural background, necessarily banded together against the unfamiliar and hostile elements. This social amalgam constituted the seed of Acadian society, and the durability of its social fabric was subsequently demonstrated by the pioneers' ability to absorb all rival francophone groups within the colony. In addition, despite the geographic expansion of the Acadian areas of settlement and the resultant subregional clan mentalities in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, the integrity of the Acadian group identity remained intact largely because of the strength of the extended families. With the absence of an effective colonial government prior

to mid-eighteenth century, familial relationships were the only viable means of tying together Acadia's isolated settlements.[58]

The vitality of the extended families also permitted Acadian society to successfully endure years of exile in hostile lands and the demands of resettlement in New Acadia. Though nuclear families were torn from their immediate relatives by the Grand Derangement, they consistently found themselves surrounded by cousins sharing their values and language. Thus able to interact on a cooperative basis for the group's interests, the Acadians preserved their culture and group identity. These sociological defense mechanisms also operated effectively in Spanish Louisiana, where they had been drawn by hope of familial and cultural reunification.[59]

These hopes were quickly dashed by the colony's first Spanish administration, which settled Acadian immigrant groups at widely separated points along the Mississippi River. Acadian anger at Spanish policies, long suppressed in the mid-1760s, erupted in late October 1768, as hundreds of Acadians assisted New Orleans creoles and German Coast settlers in expelling the Spanish governor.

After the restoration of Spanish rule in August 1769, the Louisiana Acadians continued to press their demands--though, in this instance, through legal channels--for familial reunification. From 1770 to the conclusion of the American Revolution, river Acadians repeatedly petitioned Spanish administrators for permission to join their relatives along Bayou Teche. To mask their real motives, the supplicants based their requests upon "illness, or the poor quality of the land which they inhabited." Such requests were initially judged by

the various governors solely on the merits of individual cases, and a few exiles were allowed to relocate at Attakapas, despite the commandants' vocal opposition. Policy concerning migrants shifted drastically in November 1777, as Governor Bernardo de Galvez succumbed to the pressure of river parish commandants who feared that continued migration, even on the existing miniscule scale, would depopulate their districts. This development, they argued, would have been disastrous for New Orleans which relied heavily on the river settlements for provisions.[60]

Under the terms of Galvez's orders, issued on November 10, 1777, all requests to migrate to Attakapas were to be refused unless the petitioner could fill the void created by his departure. As early immigrants usually preferred developing gratuitous land grants to purchasing established farms, securing a replacement was no easy task, especially after Spain's conquest of British West Florida temporarily stemmed the influx of Anglo-American immigrants. Acadian society thus remained geographically fragmented, and the subregional differences which had emerged in the extended families by 1755 were reinforced and perpetuated.[61]

Though Spanish settlement policies effectively discouraged the melding of distinctive Acadian immigrant groups, they paradoxically strengthened social bonds within the subregional groups. Spanish administrators consistently bowed to the Acadian tradition of residential propinquity within nuclear families. In 1770, for example, Alexis Braud relinquished his developed, eight-arpent concession for an undeveloped six-arpent land grant adjacent to his son's properties.

Custom was reinforced by Spanish laws providing for forced heirship and the consequential division of estates into narrow, adjoining strips of land.[62]

Familial ties permeated all facets of Acadian life; as in vieille Acadie, nuclear family members worked together, played together and worshipped together. Most household tasks were sexually differentiated, with men cultivating the fields, cutting timber, and building levees; and women taking "care of the barnyard," milking cows, spinning and weaving cotton, sewing and cooking. Such distinctions evaporated at harvest time, when entire families went "into the fields to pick corn and cotton." Aged family members incapable of strenuous physical labor apparently tended their young grandchildren, particularly during the harvest.[63]

Families and friends also gathered at homes of ill neighbors to assist in the household management and, in autumn, to participate in the harvest. In case of death, they consoled bereft relatives. Just as they shared the loss of a loved one, the exiles shared the joy of living, hosting--probably on a rotating basis as in the antebellum period--les bals de maison. These weekly neighborhood dances were an important diversion from the dreadful monotony of frontier life and also served to periodically renew the social bonds within the immigrant community.[64]

As in Acadia, where the gatherings featured "les chansons rustiques et la danse," New Acadia bals were unostentatious affairs. Documentary and ethnomusicological evidence suggest that the Acadian immigrants reached Louisiana without their cherished musical

instruments, particularly fiddles. The destitute musicians were thus compelled to verbally mimic fiddles when presenting the traditional Celtic reels and jigs constituting a major part of the early Acadians' musical repertoire. By the late 1770s, most of the fiddlers had achieved a comfortable existence and thus enjoyed the leisure time to make, or the financial resources to purchase, new instruments, and, in the mid-1780s, les bals de maison once again featured local fiddlers, the best of whom enjoyed regional prominence.[65] Though the instrumentation reflected the Acadians' improving economic position, the simple fare shared by the dancers was a reminder of more austere times. As French traveller C. C. Robin noted in 1804,

> Acadian Coast residents give balls . . . and will go ten to fifteen leagues to attend one. Everyone dances, even Grandmère and Grandpère, no matter what the difficulties they must bear. There may be only a couple of fiddles to play for the crowd, there may be only four candles for light . . . wooden benches to sit on, and only exceptionally a few bottles of tafia diluted with water for refreshment. No matter, everyone dances. But always everyone has a helping of gumbo, the Creole dish par excellence: then 'Good night,' . . . 'See you next week.'[66]

While the bals de maison remained generally unaffected by the rising Acadian standard of living, other forms of entertainment were not. In the late 1770s, for instance, Acadian Coast men began to congregate in local cabarets--many of which were Acadian owned and operated--to gamble at billiards.[67] But the most notable change in

Acadian leisure-time pursuits was in the exiles' growing interest in horses and, concomitantly, in horse racing. Horses had been quite scarce in Acadia until the mid-eighteenth century, and, even then, had failed to supplant oxen as the principal draft animals. In the southwestern Louisiana prairies, however, horses were indispensable in the cattle industry and for transportation in the region's broad grasslands. Because of their importance, herds of Creole ponies were carefully developed in prairie vacheries. In the Acadian settlements along the Mississippi River and Bayou Lafourche, farmers relied principally upon waterborne transportation, and, because of the local topography and growing congestion along the streams, cattle herds were necessarily confined to small fenced pastures where they could be controlled easily. Horses were thus a luxury in the eastern Acadian districts and would remain so until the 1790s, when improved roads made overland transportation feasible. Horses also became a status symbol to young, Louisiana-born Acadians who, in the 1790s, rushed to acquire riding and sulky horses.[68]

The growing interest in horses spawned, in the 1790s, the great Acadian pastime: horse racing. It began at the La Pointe settlement in present-day St. Martin Parish, and subsequently spread throughout the prairies and, later, to the river parishes as well. Early South Louisiana horse races were consistently held on straight courses, usually four arpents to a mile in length, and, although the featured races generally included pedigreed horseflesh owned by Anglo-Americans and Creole planters, the bulk of the racing schedule was filled with match races between Acadian riding ponies and draft animals.[69]

As exemplified by the rural races, the adaptability of Acadian socio-cultural institutions and economic pursuits to Louisiana's frontier environment ensured their survival in the forthcoming decades when non-Acadian immigration and the resulting rise of the large plantation system would again challenge the traditional Acadian way of life. The pragmatism and flexibility which had long characterized Acadian society enabled the destitute immigrants to immediately discard obsolete and impractical agricultural productions, architectural technology, and culinary skills for their time-proven Louisiana counterparts. Acadian society thereby acquired its distinctly Louisiana, or "Cajun" flavor. Despite the magnitude of this cultural metamorphosis, most changes were merely superficial and the core elements of Acadian culture remained fundamentally unchanged. The continuing uniformity of culture reinforced group boundaries and underscored differences between Cajuns and other local ethnic groups. Thus, like an old building with a new facade, the Acadian culture retained the same inner strength, but showed the world a new face.

FOOTNOTES

1. Petition to Ulloa from the Opelousas Acadians, March 13, 1768, PPC, 187A:n.p.; John G. Clark, New Orleans, 1718-1812: An Economic History (Baton Rouge, 1970), 185; Antoine-Simon Le Page du Pratz, The History of Louisiana . . . (1774; rpr. Baton Rouge, 1975), 61, 161-62, 177, 182, 227; Louis Judice, "Report on the Lafourche Valley," January 1, 1786, PPC, 199:247; Ascension Parish Original Acts (hereinafter APOA), Book A, pp. 37-39, Office of the Clerk of Court, Donaldsonville, La., microfilm copy on deposit at the Center for Louisiana Studies, University of Southwestern Louisiana; Anne Trahan Succession, January 15, 1775, St. Martin Parish Original Acts (hereinafter SMOA), Volume I, Office of the Clerk of Court, St. Martinville, Louisiana, microfilm copy on deposit at the Center for Louisiana Studies; List of the goods from the royal warehouse given to the Acadians from St-Domingue, April 30, 1765. AC, C 13a, 45:30; Clark, Acadie, 150; Census of Iberville

Parish, 1772, PPC, 202:241-46; Census of Ascension Parish, April 15, 1777, PPC, 190:173; Clarence LeBreton, "Civilisation materielle en Acadie," in Jean Daigle (ed.), Les Acadiens des Maritimes (Moncton, N. B., 1980), 467-520; Carl A. Brasseaux, "Acadian Life Under the Spanish Regime," Les Cahiers de la Societe historique acadienne, X (1979), 132-41; "Journal of a Voyage to Nova Scotia in 1731 Made by Robert Hale of Beverly," Historical Collections of the Essex Institute, XLII (1906), 217-41; Anne Saunier Succession, May 1773, Opelousas Colonial Records (hereinafter Opelousas Colonial Records), Louisiana State Archives and Records Service, Baton Rouge, Louisiana; Joseph Prejean Estate, July 4, 1772, APOA, Book A, pp. 37-39.

2. Arsenault, Histoire et genealogie des Acadiens, vols. 2-6; Voorhies, Some Late Eighteenth Century Louisianians, 114-28; "Copie d'un vieux registre," 1-8.

3. Rameau de St-Pere, Une Colonie feodale, I, 172-74; Clark, Acadia, 258.

4. Grover Rees, "The Dauterive Compact: The Foundation of the Acadian Cattle Industry," Attakapas Gazette, XI (1976), 91; Arsenault, Histoire et genealogie des Acadiens, vol. VI; Claude Boutté to Bernardo de Galvez, February 22, 1777, PPC, 190:131-34; LeDee to Unzaga, January 27, 1779, PPC, 192:200; LeDee to DeClouet, December 21, 1778, PPC, 198A:176; Dauterive to Unzaga, September 13, 1774, PPC, 189A:101-02; (Unzaga?) to DeClouet, September 13, 1774, PPC, 189A:102-03; Demezières to Unzaga, August 8, 1774, PPC, 198A:92-93; LeDee to Unzaga, April 18, 1774, PPC, 189A:92-93; LeDee to Unzaga, April 18, 1774, PPC, 189A:83-83vo; Minutes of an assembly regarding the "abandonment" of stray cattle, July 27, 1777, PPC, 190:293; Brasseaux, "Acadian Life," 133; "Brand Book for the Opelousas and Attakapas Districts," in the Jefferson Caffery Louisiana Room, Dupre Library, University of Southwestern Louisiana.

5. Census of the Attakapas post, 1771, PPC, 188C:43vo; Clark, Acadia, 150; Census of Quartier de Vermilion, 1803, PPC, 220B:68.

6. Fuselier de La Claire to Unzaga, November 2, 1773, PPC, 189A:66vo-67; Claude Boutté to Galvez, February 22, 1777, PPC, 190:131-33; Judice to Unzaga, November 15, 1775, PPC, 189B:288; Passport for Pierre Broussard, December 29, 1779, PPC, 192:256; DeClouet to Galvez, December 29, 1779, PPC, 192:255; Judice to Galvez, January 16, 1780, PPC, 193B:324-25vo; DeClouet to Miro, March 31, 1783, PPC, 196:162-63; DeClouet to Unzaga, January 4, 1775, PPC, 187A:n.p.; Judice to (?), October 1, 1796, PPC, 212A:470-75vo; Judice to Miro, May 29, 1787, PPC, 200:530; DeClouet to Pedro Piernas, April 27, 1781, PPC, 194:145vo; Anonymous declaration regarding DeClouet and the New Orleans slaughterhouse, August 27, 1781, PPC, 194:190; Collet to DeClouet, March 24, 1783, PPC, 196:174-75; DeClouet to Galvez, December 21, 1779, PPC, 193B:43-44; DeClouet to Galvez, October 3, 1779, PPC, 192:239; DeClouet to Galvez, December 29, 1779, PPC, 192:254-56; DeClouet to Galvez, October 3, 1779, PPC, 192:239; Galvez to DeClouet, August 16, 1779, PPC, 192:227-28; DeClouet's ordinance, December 29, 1779, PPC,

192:256; DeClouet to Galvez, April 13, 1781, PPC, 194:138vo-40; DeClouet to Piernas, April 27, 1781, PPC, 194:145vo; Piernas to DeClouet, May 13, 1781, PPC, 194:161vo; Official decree regarding the shipment of beef to New Orleans, August 27, 1781, PPC, 194:190; Piernas to DeClouet, September 21, 1781, PPC, 194:192.

7. DeClouet to Piernas, April 27, 1781, PPC, 194:145vo; Jean Delavillebeuvre to Miro, October 20, 1789, PPC, 212A:371.

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9. Voorhies, Some Late Eighteenth Century Louisianians, 114-39; Arsenault, Histoire et genealogie des Acadiens, vols. 2-6; Chandler, "Odyssey Continued," 446-65; Chandler, "End of an Odyssey," 69-87.

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19. Census of the Lafourche post, 1788, PPC, 201:668-80; Miro to (?), March 18, 1785, PPC, 198A:369.

20. Robin, Voyage to Louisiana, 115; G. P. Whittington (ed.), "The Journal of John Sibley, June-October, 1802," Louisiana Historical Quarterly, X (1927), 480-81; General Census of the Valenzuela District of the Lafourche Post, 1797, PPC, 213:286-311.

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26. Charles Descoudreaux to Unzaga, (1770), PPC, 188B:182; Rameau de St-Pere, Une Colonie feodale, I, 219; Unzaga to Verret, August 30, 1770, PPC, 188A:1d/42, 44a; Unzaga to Verret, August 11, 1770, PPC, 188A:1d/42; Descoudreaux to Unzaga, March 23, 1771, PPC, 188B:211; Margaret Fisher Dalrymple (ed.), The Merchant of Manchac: The Letter Books of John Fitzpatrick, 1768-1790 (Baton Rouge, 1978), 13-20, 87, 95, 102, 104, 196; Judice to Unzaga, January 4, 1776, PPC, 189B:302; Judice to Unzaga, October 127, 1776, PPC, 189B:343; Judice to Galvez, February 16, 1780, PPC, 193B:331-32; Judice to Miro, March 23, 1785, PPC, 197:297; Judice, "Report on the Lafourche Valley," January 1, 1786, PPC, 199:247; Pierre-Louis Berquin-Duvallon, Vue de la colonie du Mississippi . . . (Paris, 1803), 51-53.

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33. Fontaine (ed.), Voyage du Sieur de Diereville, 61; "Journal of a Voyage to Nova Scotia Made in 1731," 233.

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41. Carl A. Brasseaux (comp.), "A Report of Manufacturing and Manufactured Articles, 1810," Attakapas Gazette, X (1975), 153; "An 1810 Census Report on the State of Manufacturing in the Northeastern Section of the Attakapas District," Attakapas Gazette, X (1975), 102; D. H. Thomas, "Pre-Whitney Cotton Gins in French Louisiana," Journal of Southern History, XXXI (1965), 134-48; Pierre-Clement de Laussat, Memoirs of My Life . . ., trans. Agnes-Josephine Pastiva, ed. Robert D. Bush (New Orleans, 1978), 64; Anne Saunier Estate, May 12, 1773, Opelousas Colonial Records; Joseph Prejean Estate, July 4, 1772, APOA; Francois Savoy Estate, December 28, 1780, and Anne Trahan Estate, January 15, 1777, both in SMOA; Martin, "Kelly-Nugent Report," 192; Proces-verbal of the examination and identification of Charles Babin's

corpse, June 5, 1774, PPC, 189A:403; Clark, New Orleans, 187-88; Berquin-Duvallon, Vue de la colonie espagnole, 53-55; Robin, Voyage to Louisiana, 115-91; Inventory of Charles Babin's Estate, June 3, 1774, PPC, 189B:543-46; Joseph Richard Estate, December 24, 1776, APOA; Francois Savoy Estate, December 28, 178?, Anne Trahan Estate, January 5, 1775, and Helene Landry Estate, May 26, 1775, all in SMOA. By the early nineteenth century Acadian weavers used natural dyes to produce blue, white, red, black, yellow and grey-colored cloth. George F. Reinecke (trans. and ed.), "Early Louisiana French Life and Folklore, form the Anonymous Breaux Manuscript as Edited by Professor Jay K. Ditchy," Louisiana Folklore Miscellany, II (1966), 21.

42. Joseph Richard Estate, December 24, 1776, Isabelle LeBlanc Estate, April 18, 1778, both in APOA; Martin, trans., "Kelly-Nugent Report," 192; Robin, Voyage to Louisiana, 115.

43. Fontaine (ed.), Voyage du Sieur de Dièreville, 53-54; Proces-verbal of the examination and identification of Charles Babin's corpse, June 5, 1774, PPC, 189A:403; Robin, Voyage to Louisiana, 115; W. W. Pugh, "Bayou Lafourche from 1820-1825: Its Inhabitants, Customs, and Pursuits," Louisiana Planter and Sugar Manufacturer (October 29, 1888), 143. Louisiana Acadians continued to wear moccasins and cantiers (moccasins with short leatherf leggings) until mid-nineteenth century. "Breaux Manuscript," 22.

44. Lauvriere, Tragedie, I, 183; Isabelle LeBlanc Estate, April 18, 1778, APOA; Jeanne Arseneault and Lynn Losier, "Le Costume traditionel des hommes," in Confectionnez vos costumes acadiens pour les fêtes du 375e (Caraquet, N. B., 1979), 4; Joseph Richard Estate, December 24, 1776, APOA; Michel Meaux Estate, May 10, 1785, SMOA; W. H. Sparks, The Memories of Fifty Years . . . (4th ed.; Macon, Ga., 1882), 374.

45. Proces-verbal of the examination and identification of Charles Babin's corpse, June 5, 1774, PPC, 189A:403; Berquin-Duvallon, Vue de la colonie espagnole, 52, 251-52; Inventory of Charles Babin's Estate, June 3, 1774, PPC, 189B:543-46; Anne Trahan Estate, January 15, 1775, Francois Savoy Succession, December 28, 1780, and Basil Landry Estate, September 19, 1785, all in SMOA; Robin, Voyage to Louisiana, 115; Estate of "Mr. and Mrs. Landry," March 14, 1778, APOA.

46. "Journal of a Voyage to Nova Scotia Made in 1731," 234; Berquin-Duvallon, Vue de la colonie espagnole, 250-51; Joseph Broussard Estate, December 19, 1788, SMOA.

47. Rameau de St-Pere, Une Colonie feodale, I, 125-26; "Journal of a Voyage to Nova Scotia Made in 1731," 233; Clark, Acadia, 105, 138, 165-66; LeBreton, "Civilisation materielle," 476.

48. Clark, Acadia, 64, 105, 138; Rameau de St-Pere, Une Colonie feodale, I, 125-26.

49. "Journal of a Voyage to Nova Scotia Made in 1731," 233; Clark, Acadia, 138.

50. Simon Landry Estate, May 16, 1782, APOA; Inventory of the Charles Babin Estate, June 3, 1774, PPC, 189B:543-46; Anne Trahan Estate, January 15, 1775 and Michel Meaux Estate, May 10, 1785, both in SMOA.

51. Brasseaux, "Acadian Life," 140; R. Warren Robison, "Louisiana Acadian Domestic Architecture," in Gibson and Del Sesto (eds.), The Culture of Acadiana, 67-68, 71-72; Martin, Les Exiles acadiens, 172; Isabelle Richard Estate, April 18, 1778, Mathurin Landry Estate, November 10, 1800, and Felicite Landry Estate, March 6, 1800, all in APOA.

52. Anne Saunier Cormier Estate, May 12, 1773, Opelousas Colonial Records.

53. "Journal of a Voyage to Nova Scotia Made in 1731," 233.

54. Anne Trahan Estate, January 15, 1775, SMOA; Joseph Richard Estate, December 24, 1776, APOA; Photographs of Acadian antiques in the Ira Nelson Collection, Southwestern Archives, University of Southwestern Louisiana; Desirée LeBlanc Estate, November 8, 1777, Joseph Richard Estate, December 24, 1776, and the Armant Gotreau Estate, 1811, all in APOA.

55. Isabelle LeBlanc Estate, April 18, 1778, APOA; Basil Landry Estate, September 19, 1785, SMOA; Berquin-Duvallon, Vue de la colonie espagnole, 51-53.

56. Brebner, New England's Outpost, 61, 139-40; Lauvriere, Tragedie, I, 190.

57. Chevalier de Bellevue to Unzaga, May 27, 1771, PPC, 188C:64; Judice to Unzaga, January 3, 1772, PPC, 189A:418; Petition to Unzaga from the Opelousas Acadians, June 3, 1773, PPC, 189A:55; Fuselier de la Claire to Unzaga, June 18, 1773, PPC, 189A:56vo-57; Verret to Unzaga, February 11, 1771, PPC, 188B:72; Verret to Unzaga, December 9, 1771, PPC, 188B:134; Judice to Unzaga, June 3, 1771, PPC, 188B:94-98; Bellevue to Unzaga, May 27, 1771, PPC, 188C:64; Judice to Unzaga, January 3, 1772, PPC, 189A:418; Petition of the Assumption Parish Acadians to Unzaga, October 16, 1773, PPC, 189A:498; Judice to Miro, December 4, 1790, PPC, 202:377-78vo; Nicolas Verret to Miro, January 3, 1790, PPC, 203:274; Judice to Miro, March 15, 1790, PPC, 203:295-97; Petition of the Opelousas Acadians to Unzaga, June 3, 1773, PPC, 189A:55; Miro to Judice, February 20, 1790, PPC, 203:285; Nicolas Verret to Miro, April 8, 1790, PPC, 203:302; Verret to Miro, July 19, 1790, PPC, 203:328; Brasseaux, "Acadian Life," 134-36; Antoine Bernard Dauterive to DeClouet, September 13, 1774, PPC, 189A:101-02; LeDee to DeClouet, December 21, 1778, PPC, 198A:176.

58. Griffiths, Creation of a People, 14-18.

59. Ulloa to Grimaldi, May 19, 1766, ASD, 2585:n.p.

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62. Judice to Unzaga, December 3, 1770, PPC, 188A:1d/34.

63. Ulloa to Grimaldi, May 19, 1766, ASD, 2585:n.p.; Robin, Voyage to Louisiana, 191.

64. Judice to Galvez, October 16, 1781, PPC, 194:498; Robin, Voyage to Louisiana, 115.

65. Barry J. Ancelet and Michael Doucet, "The Evolution of Cajun and Creole Music" (paper presented before the French Colonial Historical Society, 10th annual meeting, Lafayette, Louisiana, 1980).

66. Robin, Voyage to Louisiana, 115.

67. Judice to Carondelet, March 29, 1796, PPC, 213:336; Unzaga to Judice, November 22, 1771, PPC, 188C:95; Piernas to Cantrelle, April 9, 1781, PPC, 194:296; Proces-verbal of an investigation into the death of Joseph Hebert, August 21, 1787, PPC, 200:468-470vo.

68. Clark, Acadia, 167; Census of the Attakapas post, 1771, PPC, 188C:43vo; Census of the Quartier de Vermilion, 1803, PPC, 220B:68; Judice to Galvez, July 27, 1777, PPC, 190:290-91; Proces-verbal of an assembly regarding the "abandonment" of stray cattle, July 27, 1777, PPC, 190:293; Robin, Voyage to Louisiana, 100; Judice to Carondelet, August 22, 1796, PPC, 212A:460-61vo.

69. Interrogation of Nicolas Roussel, November 23, 1797, PPC, 214:248-49; Deposition by J. C. Dugas, October 9, 1797, PPC, 214:239; Deposition by Olivier Thibodeau, October 9, 1797, PPC, 214:240; Deposition by Firmin Brau, November 29, 1797, PPC, 214:245; Opelousas Courier, February 12, 18, 1853; New Iberia Louisiana Sugar Bowl, May 1, 1873; Baton Rouge Gazette, October 4, 1828.

THE CREOLES OF LOUISIANA

Carl Brasseaux

In recent years the international "Cajun" phenomenon has attracted to Louisiana legions of journalists who, after a cursory examination of the South Louisiana scene, have pontificated on all things French. Undetered by their ignorance, they have further muddled an already clouded popular perception of Acadiana and its French-speaking inhabitants. This is particularly true of the poorly understood socio-cultural differences between the region's Cajun and Creole groups. In the most recent Loiuisiana history contest, for instance, scores of middle school students--primarily natives of Louisiana--confused the identities of the two groups. In fact, a student of once predominately Creole New Orleans defined a Cajun as "a person born of the Spanish-French ancestory,"the traditional description a Creole.

The term "Creole" alone is cause for confusion. Over the years, the term has gained a multiplicity of meanings, as different groups have ascribed the label to various distinct peoples. The resulting confusion, both within the state and throughout the country, is such that the most commonly asked question in Louisiana history is what does the term Creole mean? Its usage has evolved over the years and consequently the term has come to mean something different to everyone who uses it. The word "Creole" is a French corruption of the Spanish term Criollo which in its original form meant "born in the New World of European parents." Often the word carried a derogatory connotation, for newly arrived European colonists, both in the Spanish and French

colonies considered themselves somehow inately superior to their American-born neighbors. Thus, in Louisiana the term came to mean the descendants of the early settlers--French, Spanish, German, and sometimes even Anglo--who were born in the region before the Louisiana Purchase. Over the years, a common culture, economic pursuits and a high degree of intermarriage transformed these Louisiana-born progeny of Europeans into a caste that generally considered itself superior to the other French-speaking groups in the state, particularly the Acadians. Thus the term Creole became synonymous with aristocrat, and today, when white Louisianians of French descent call themselves Creole, what they really mean is that they are not Cajuns.

Closely related is the adjective "creole" (lower case "c") which refers to the adaptation of a product to a New World environment. Thus, in Louisiana, there were creole ponies, creole tomatoes, and, before the Civil War, creole slaves. Creole salves generally carried a higher price tag than freshly imported Africans because they were considered to be more docile, seasoned to the climate, trained for field work or domestic tasks, and were French-speaking.

Which brings us to the third meaning of the term "Creole"--a speaker of the Creole language. Creole dialects arise in areas where two languages come into contact, one the tongue of a dominant elite, often masters in a slave society, the other the speech of a dominated mass, usually slaves. Creole dialects begin as <u>pidgin</u>, a greatly simplified, bastardized version of the dominant language, intermingled with words and phrases from the other, subordinate tongue. Pidgin enables each group to communicate with the other while continuing to

use his own speech. When a pidgin totally displaces either or both languages instead of coexisting with them it becomes a "creole" dialect. In the New World there are English, Dutch, and French creole dialects. In Louisiana, the term creole can thus refer to Negro and mixed-racial speakers of the French creole dialect, much to the white Creoles' chagrin. In fact, George Washington Cable--a nationally prominent writer of the late 19th century, was literally run out of New Orleans for suggesting in his works that blacks could be called Creoles also.

This multiplicity of meanings leads to considerable confusion. Often creole will vary in meaning depending on who is speaking and what is spoken about. But it is in the cultural sense that the term Creole is used most frequently, and the term conjures up images of grandeur and glamour, of columned plantation houses, filled with mahogany furniture, crystal, silver, and supported by armies of field hands and legions of domestic servants. Creole women, the stereotype goes, were always beautiful, gracious, sophisticated, and high spirited; the men, proud to the point of arrogance, brave to the point of recklessness. As a Creole character in a George Washington Cable short story tells his grandson: "Remember child, you belong to a race that has never bowed to man or God." Another writer, latter-day New Orleans Creole Launcelot Minor Harris would have us believe that the Creole pioneers of St. Martinville "maintained the etiquette, and, as far as possible, the dress of the French court life." Still another New Orleans Creole, Joseph Tregle, a former dean of Liberal Arts of UNO, paints a less idyllic portrait of his forebears:

"Provincial in outlook, style, and taste, the typical Latin Creole was complaisant, unlettered, unskilled, content to occupy his days with the affairs of his estate or the demands of his job, for it should be obvious that the average Creole was no more wealthy than the average man anywhere and worked where work was to be had. He lived in sensation rather than reflection, enjoying the balls and dances, betting heavily at table or perhaps at the cockpit, endlessly smoking his inevitable cigar, whiling away hours over his beloved dominoes, busying himself with the many demands of his close-knit family life. Seldom a fashion plate, he was more often than not adorned in pantaloons of blue cottonade, coarse and ungainly in appearance and separated from mishappen shoes by a considerable visible stretch of blue-striped yarn stockings. A hat of no standard style and an ill-fated coat with long, narrow collars ....usually completed the costume." Tregle's observations certainly constitute a drastic departure from the traditional stereotype, so much that he seems to be speaking about a different group entirely. What then, was the Louisiana Creole, and which of these conflicting views best depicts his station in society? Was the typical Creole truly a member of a cultured aristocracy? Or, was he an average person of modest means, hiding behind the facade of an intricate local mythology? During the remainder of this article, we will attempt to determine which of these depictions offers a more accurate picture of historic reality.

White Creole society was shaped by the French crucible in which it was formed. Louisiana was colonized by France at a time when French colonial policy dictated that colonies should be extensions of the

mother country, literally "New Frances." Colonies were to have the same administrative institutions as the French provinces, to be ministered to by the same church, and develop the same feudalistic social structure, with proper subordination of the lower classes to the "better elements of society." In these New Frances existing across the Atlantic, this highly structured society would consist--in the colonial ministry's vision--of whites at the top of the hierarchy, a peasantry consisting of converted Indians and, in the case of Louisiana, an additional underclass of black serfs. This social system was to be established by the nobel and wealthy classes and dispensed in a miserly fashion to lesser freemen.

The administration architects of colonial Louisiana saw this new social order as an improved facsimile of France's anachronistic feudal society, precisely because of the more perfect regimentation of the lower classes. Though the philosophes might praise the independence, or, more to the point, the insubordination, of Indian warriors vis-a-vis their chiefs, most 18th century Frenchmen, living under an absolutist monarchy, saw the lack of a powerful ruling class as proof of the Indians' savagery. In fact, throughout the 18th century, Frenchmen in Louisiana would universally refer to Native Americans as les sauvages.

Given this mentality, it is easy to see how those colonists who carved a new home along the Mississippi River and the Gulf Coast would come to view themselves as the nucleus of an emerging colonial aristocracy. Status meant everything in Louisiana as it did in France, because one was what one seemed to be. From the earliest days of the

colony, when food and supply shortage literally threatened the very existence of Louisiana, the colonists fought constantly among themselves, not over food, clothing, or shelter as one might expect, but over socially advantageous marriages, the location of their pews in church, and which officers' ranks took precedence over those of others when lining up for religious and governmental processions.

The jockeying for position then occuring between officials paled by comparison to the vicious rivalries between the colony's women. In 1704, for example, one of the prospective brides sent to Louisiana refused to marry beneath her station, and not even France's Minister of the Navy and Colonies could make her change her mind. These socially conscious French women transferred their values to their children, the first generation of white Creoles in Louisiana. A good example of this is the Chauvin family. The first generation of Chauvins--three brothers--were Canadian adventurers, backwoodsmen who came to Louisiana with Iberville at the dawn of Louisiana colonization. Two of them married French women, while the third married a relative of Governor Bienville. Through hard work, the Chauvin brothers managed to build some of the largest plantations along the Mississippi River, and their wealth earned them grudging recognition from the colony's French-born administrators: Nicolas Chauvin, though unlettered, served on the colony's supreme tribunal, the Superior Council, for many years before his death. The aspirations of the Chauvins, however, were not merely political, and it was perhaps through their wives' influence that the Canadians followed the example of the Le Moynes and other prominent Canadian families in using the particle "de" and a place name to

distinguish branches of the family--as the French nobility would have done--instead of using *dit* names as was commonplace among the lower classes throughout the empire.

In a continuing effor to have the family take its proper station inLouisiana society, Nicholas Chauvin de Lafreniere, *fils*, son of the Superior Council member, was sent to France for an education superior to that of the Frenchmen then governing the colony. As a consequence, when he returned to Louisiana in 1763, bearing a royal commission as attorney general, he was able to establish himself as a force to be reckoned with in government and as the spokesman for the interests of his fellow Creoles. It was in the latter capacity that he would devote most of his time and attention.

Lafreniere's role in the 1768 New Orleans rebellion is famous, but less well known is the part that he played in the evolution of the colony's slave system. In the 1750s and early 1760s, Louisiana planters has come to view their slaves as an increasingly significant threat to the colony's internal security. Consequently, as one of his first acts after returning from France, Lafreniere began to use his judicial authority to tighten the relatively lax existing regulations on Louisiana slaves and thus moved to bring Louisiana into line with the prevailing French obsession with hierarchical control of the lower, subservient elements of society.

Tighter controls over slaves placed additional *de facto* power in the hands of the Creole farmers who were by the late 18th century almost exclusively slaveholders. This, in turn, elevated the Creoles into the top social position in the emerging plantation areas along the

Mississippi River, where they constituted a majority of the population.

Thus, by 1770, the Creole caste, outside of New Orleans, had come to view itself as the aristocracy--and indead it was--in Louisiana's poor mirror image of French society. Their self-image was given some credibility when many officers in Louisiana's French garrison retired and settled in the colony after 1763. Though only a handful of these former officers--DeClouet, De L'Homme, Dauterive and Delahoussaye--claimed a legitimate claim to nobility--and then only as chevaliers-- the absolute lowest rung of the French noblity--several others were chevaliers of the Military Order of St. Louis, an honorific, non-hereditary title bestowed upon deserving officers for meritorious service. Although their titles would have been sneered at in the mother country, they were highly prized in the backwater that was rural South Louisiana. Scores of chevaliers, in full dress uniform, still glare down upon their descendants in drawing rooms throughout South Louisiana.

The pretensions of the rural Creoles were matched, and perhaps even surpassed, by those of their New Orleans cousins. New Orleans society prior to 1800 was nothing like what emerged after the Louisiana Purchase. New Orleans was populated primarily by businessmen and as mercantile pursuits were off-limits to the French nobility, the town's businessmen has few social pretensions. But, in 1809, 10,000 refugees from the Haitian revolution, who had spent ten years growing sugarcane at Santiago de Cuba, arrive <u>en masse</u>, unannounced, at New Orleans' doorstep and immediately overwhelmed the native French-speaking population. Forced to leave their homes with little notice for the

second time in a decade, they arrived with little more than what they could carry and the few domestic slaves that chose to follow them. These people, like those of South Louisiana, had been farmers, and the social elite of thier Santo Domingan communities. And, like the French elite, they considered commerce as being beneath their dignity, unless it was conducted on a massive, international scale, but, lacking the resources to return to farming, they were trapped in the region's commercial center. Often highly educated, the Santo Domingan Creoles utilized their skills to procure gainful employment in government, in the legal and medical professions, and as educators. Others rented their domestics to members of the Crescent City's native Creole community to make a living, while still others turned to journalism, operating city's first newspapers. Finally, some Santo Domingans established theatres to sate the refugees' passionate love for French opera and ballet. No matter their economic status, the transplanted Santo Domingans put on their finest and went to the various theatres for weekend performances. Their continuing patronage of the theatrical and opeatic arts helped to bring to America some of the finest talent that Europe had to offer, and New Orleans became the center of classical culture in North America until the Civil War.

It was this love of theatricals, combined with their preoccupation with social status that prompted the Santo-Domingans, now the stereotypical New Orleans Creoles, to transform the Crescent City carnival from a drunken riot into its present form, with all of its pageantry and royalty. The attitudes that gave Mardi Gras its character, however, doomed the New Orleans Creoles to the status of a

permanent economic underclass for the 19th century and much of the early 20th century. Because their values permitted them to engage in only the "noble" professions--farming, the legal and medical professions, educational and governmental service--the Creoles permitted the American and European immigrants of the 19th century to move into, and quickly dominate, the city's thriving commercial sector. With wealth came status and political power. The New Orleans Creoles attempted to preserve their privileged niche in New Orleans society by establishing themselves as a city within a city. The Vieux Carré became a separate entity as New Orleans was divided into three municipalities, each governed by an autonomous city administration for much of the 19th century.

Such isolationism only compounded the Creoles' problem, for it left the French Quarter--the heart of Creole New Orleans--with a very small tax base. City services consequently declined, as did the quality of life in the Vieux Carré, and it is previsely because of this pervasive poverty that the Quarter's old buildings were preserved. By the end of Reconstruction (1877), the French Quarter was a glorified slum. In fact, recent studies have shown that it was the decline in living standards in the Vieux Carré that forced the dispersal of New Orleans' Creole community in the early 20th century.

The fate of the New Orleans Creoles was shared by their country cousins. Though blessed with greater economic opportunities, the country Creoles' values prevented them from acquiring the wealth that was within their grasp. Because of the importance of maintaining appearance, country Creoles used the profits from their agricultural

endeavors to buy expensive silverware, carriages, rosewood or mahogany furniture, fine clothing, to retain dance instructors for their daughters, to commission fine portraits of themselves, to erect small, but ostentatious homes--in a word, for conspicuous consumption. Because little capital was reinvested in the farm, the overwhelming majority of Creoles never progressed beyond the level of small planters. The much ballyhooed stories of Valcour Aimé notwithstanding, statistical analyses of the antebellum Mississippi River parishes show clearly that of the three existing groups of planters--Anglo-Americans, Acadians/Cajuns, and Creoles--the Creoles were easily the least affluent of the members of this class.

The marginal economic status of the rural Creoles made them vulnerable to the economic depression following the Civil War. Many planters, particularly those whose plantations were damaged or destroyed by fighting during the war, lost everything when sugar pries stayed low and labor costs soared after 1865. Poorly educated, the children of these planters found themselves with few resources and quickly lost status as they were forced to take any job available to survive.

The Creoles' fall from grace gave rise to a body of mythology regarding a golden age that never was. Most Louisianians are familiar with the stories of the spiders imported from China for the Pine and Oak Alley wedding, with the celebrated performances of French opera companies in antebellum St. Martinville, with the presence of the great houses of French nobility who took refuge along the Teche after the French Revolution, and with the donation of a baptismal font by Louis

XVI to St. Martin of Tours Catholic Church--all stories proven unfounded by recent historical research. Yet, these stories persist because they gave--and still provide--the now fallen Creoles with a continuing sense of social prominence based upon perceived past glories.

This was absolutely necessary, the Creoles believe, to avoid social levelling with the Acadians, who had, from their eighteenth-century arrival in Louisiana, steadfastly resisted the efforts of Creoles to treat them like peasants, and with those "other" Creoles--the poor white Creoles and the black Creoles that the genteel Creoles never mentioned in polite society. The most prominent elements of the poor white Creole community were the prairie Creoles of Evangeline Parish and the descendants of the Malagueño and Isleño immigrants of the late eighteenth century. Settled in the New Iberia, Donaldsonville, Port, Vincent, and Terre aux Boeufs areas, most of these Spanish immigrants quickly,with the exception of those settled along Bayou Lafourche and in St. Bernard Parish, lost their cultural identity and were absorbed by their Acadian neighbors. Those Bayou Lafourche and St. Bernard area Spaniards who proved more resistant to change adopted economic pursuits--fishing and trapping--that were deemed demeaning by genteel Creoles. Hence, neither group--while technically Creole--has ever identified itself as such; nor have they ever been claimed as <u>confrères</u> by the more affluent, self-proclaimed Creoles.

Nor have the genteel Creoles demonstrated any interest in their poor prairie relations. The prairie Creoles, like the genteel

Creoles, are descendants of French colonists who were in Louisiana before the arrival of the Acadians. These people--the Fontenots, Lafleurs, Guillorys, Brignacs, Bonins, Laviolettes, and others--were originally settlers of Alabama before 1763. Most were enlisted men in the Fort Toulouse garrison (located in present-day Montgomery, Alabama) until the English occupied the area in 1764. These former soldiers, and a few Mobile residents, then migrated to settlement sites near present-day Washington, Louisiana, from which they quickly migrated to modern-day Evangeline Parish. There they became small farmers and ranchers very much like the Acadians residing only a few miles to the south in present-day Acadia Parish; evidence, however, clearly indicates that culturally based antagonisms existed between these groups. These differences were sometimes manifested in voilent clashes, such as the Civil War raids upon Acadian communities by prairie Creole jayhawkers. Contacts between prairie Creoles and prairie Cajuns in this century have often erupted in violence, be it at high school football stadiums of at night clubs. Even today, the residents of Manou will tell you privately that they "are not really Cajuns." But in recent years they have nevertheless adopted the Cajun identity, partly at attract the tourist dollar and partly because the genteel Creoles' refusal to acknowledge them left them with no other French identity to which they could cling. The resulting blurring of cultural boundaries has given rise to a sharp increase in intermarriage between the two groups in the last two decades, with assimilation of the prairie Creoles by the Cajuns as the inevitable result.

Like the prairie Creoles, the black Creoles have suffered a major

identity crisis in recent years. Black Creoles are primarily descendants of the gens de couleur libre, those blacks who were free before the Civil War. Free blacks were present in Louisiana in the 1620s, though not in significant numbers until after the 1729-1730 Natchez Wars when scores of African slaves who had fought Indians with the French wre rewarded with their freedom. Other slaves were emancipated for faithful service or because they had borne children of white farmers. In 1763, the free blacks numbered approximately 150 in a colonial population of 10,000. Forty years later, there were 2,000-2,500 free blacks in Louisiana, these free blacks formed the nucleus of a culturally and economically significant caste which would give Louisiana society its Caribbean character.

Enjoying most of the legal rights extended whites, these ex-slaves became, in the 19th century, one of the most prosperous segments of Louisiana's free population. Usually labeled "mulattoes" by whites, despite a tremendous range in the racial mixture of individual group members, the gens de couleur libre congregated in small communities in the following areas before the Civil War: île Brevelle, near Nactchitoches; the Leonville and Lawtell-Swords area of St. Landry Parish; the Grand marais area of present-day Iberia Parish; with smaller, less well defined communities in Avoyelles, Iberville and Vermillion parishes. Of the foregoing communities, the St. Landry group was clearly the largest,consisting of 1,500 individuals in an 1860 population of approximately 21,500 (including 10,000 whites and 10,000 Negro slaves). But not all free blacks were rural folk; the 1850 census of Vermillionville (present-day Lafayette), for example,

indicates that thirty-nine percent of the town's free population was composed of les gens de couleur libre.

The free black communities of antebellum South Louisiana were composed primarily of artisans and craftsmen. In Vermillionville, "mulatto" carpenters, blacksmiths, and joiners often owned property valued in excess of that possessed by most white farmers in the immediate vicinity of town. In southwestern Louisians, most of the antebellum hotels and many of the bordellos were owned and operated by free black women. Outside of towns, most free blacks were small farmers, and many owned slaves. A not insignificant number of "mulattos" in St. Landry and Natchitoches parishes owned large numbers of slaves, a practice entirely in keeping with their African heritage. According to the 1840 census, for example, Martin Donato, a free man of color in St. Landry Parish, was one of the five largest slaveholders in Louisiana. Planters like Donato and the Metoyers in Natchitoches Parish also served as private bankers to their white neighbors.

The urban free blacks shared in the waxing economic fortunes of their country counterparts. The free black community of New Orleans, which numbered approximately 19,000 out of a total population of 150,000 in 1850, was composed principally of artisans and craftsman, as in the rural towns. Particularly prominent were the ironworkers who fashioned the beautiful iron grillwork that presently graces the buildings of the French Quarter. The free blacks also dominated the docks for decades, and were generally known as the most industrious longshoremen available in the Crescent City. Many hotels and brothels were also owned and operated by "mulatresses." And, of course, there

were the "kept women"--the famous New Orleans quadroons, mistresses of Louisiana's white elite, and their children. These children--as well as the progeny of such unions in the rural parished--were usually well provided for by their fathers. Because Louisiana law forbade the education of blacks, many free black boys were sent to France for their schooling and professional training. The black professionals who would emerge as leaders of the Reconstruction era were drawn from this group. These black professionals also constituted the city's Negro intelligentsia, operating pro-Republician, Reconstruction-era newspapers and producing an important body of poetry and short stories.

Although the post-war era allowed the free black community to blossom intellectually, it also left them in a quandry regarding the newly freed slaves. Like the white Creoles, the gens de couleur libre had come to view themselves as being innately superior to their neighbors. To differentiate themselves from the freedmen, the free blacks began to refer to themselves as Creoles, and, though they found it politically expedient to portray themselves as the spokesmen for Negroes after the Civil War, they would have nothing to do socially with the dark-skinned ex-slaves. As the economic fortunes of the property holding rural blacks fell as a result of wartime economic destruction and as the free blacks found that the distinction between themselves and the ex-slaves gradually fading in the years after the war, the "mulattoes" began to segregate themselves more and more from their Negro neighbors. These social barriers were diminished, but not destroyed, during the Civil Rights movement, and tensions between white Creoles and Cajuns. Such parallels in development between white and

black Creole societies are striking, but equally significant are the gulfs of prejudice and identity that separate them. It was a case of "so close, and yet so far."

SYNOPSIS

At the time of Louisiana's establishment, France sought to mold its colonies into somewhat more modest reflections of itself. The objectives of the metropole were shared by many colonists who, unable to enjoy the fruits of their family's socio-economic position because of the realms' laws of primogeniture, sought to establish themselves as a colonial aristocracy. Their descendants, the Creoles, did indeed eventually constitute a de facto social aristocracy in South Louisiana from mid-eighteenth century to the late nineteenth century. Underpinning this colonial aristocracy was a burgeoning slave population. Other white groups also occupied--at least from the Creole perspective--lower rungs on Louisiana's social ladder.

It was precisely this feudalistic view of the world that created friction between the Creoles and the Acadians. The Creoles viewed the Acadians as peasants and attempted to treat them as such. The Acadians who sprang from peasant stock bitterly resented Creole arrogance and stubbornly regused to compromise the self dignity their ancestors had earned on the Canadian frontier. On the contrary, rejecting the Creole notion of inate superiority, most of the exiles joined the Creoles in a decades-long struggle for socio-economic supremacy in the bayou country.

LOUISIANA'S ACADIAN COMMUNITY DURING THE SECESSION CRISIS AND THE CIVIL WAR

Carl A. Brasseaux

Despite the fragmentation of Acadian society during the antebellum period, as well as the increasing materialism of the nouveau riche planters, most of Louisiana's Acadians remained an insular people whose view of the world extended no further than their parish boundaries. Affairs of national importance, such as the increasingly volatile slavery issue, were of only marginal importance to these South Louisianians. Such insularity, of course, was shattered by the onset of the Civil War and by the subsequent establishment of military conscription by the Confederate States government. This unwelcome encroachment into their daily lives was bitterly resented by most Cajuns who, incapable of identifying with the Southern cause, passively resisted conscription. In fact, in the late 1970s, elderly Acadians still referred to the conflict as "la guerre des Conéfédérs," or Confederates' war, in a tone inferring that the struggle was locally unpopular. The Acadian population, however, also contributed three brigadier generals and a host of lesser officers to Louisiana's Confederate forces and state and parish governments.

This apparent paradox is the result of the divergent interests of the various classes now existing in Louisiana Acadian society. As war clouds gathered in 1860, Louisiana's Acadians were divided into two major ideological groups: on one hand, staunchly pro-Southern Acadian

planters and large farmers who engaged in staple crop production with numerous slaves; and, on the other hand, the far more numerous yeoman farmers and ranchers, who, despite their traditional allegiance to the state's Democratic party, maintained precious little interest in Southern rights. The close identification of Acadian large slaveholders with the Southern planter establishment can be attributed to the assimilation of nouveau riche Acadians, such as Louisiana Governor and future Confederate general Paul O. Hebert, into the Creole planter aristocracy. Such upwardly mobile Acadians consciously emulated their wealthy Creole neighbors in the 1830s and 1840s by drastically expanding their landholdings and by acquiring large numbers of slaves to cultivate their new acquisitions. The impact of this evolutionary process, discussed in the preceding chapter, is seen perhaps most clearly on the region's political scene.

The Acadian planters, while visibly severing their ties to their cultural heritage and simultaneously seeking to distance themselves socially from the petit habitants, openly courted the support of their less affluent neighbors as they sought to take their place in the state's planter-dominated politics. The insular Cajun seemingly welcomed the political leadership of the economic elite. This is particularly true of the isolated prairie Cajuns, who looked to their fellow Acadian, former Governor and United States Senator Alexandre Mouton, for political guidance from the early 1840s until 1860. Unfortunately for these non-slaveholders, however, Mouton worked tirelessly for Southern rights and, later, for secession following his supposed retirement from politics in 1847.

Because of the former Governor's ideology and unblemished record of Democratic party support, the 1860 state Democratic convention elected Mouton as chairman of the state delegation to the national party assembly at Charleston. When the convention became deadlocked over the issue of mandatory federal protection of slavery in the territories, Mouton led the Louisiana delegation in bolting the meeting. Mouton's actions were subsequently endorsed by the state Democratic Central Committee, and the Pelican State delegates were instructed to attend the re-convened Democratic convention in Baltimore, Md. Supporters of presidential hopeful Stephan Douglas managed to block admission of the anti-Douglasite Louisiana and Alabama delegations, and the censured delegates, accompanied by many Douglas opponents, held a rump convention and selected John C. Breckinridge as their standard-bearer. Upon returning to Louisiana, Mouton actively supported the Breckinride campaign, and, through the efforts of the former governor and his cohorts, the Kentuckian carried the western Acadian parishes. Mouton's crusade for Southern rights, however, was not terminated by Breckinridge's ultimate defeat by the Republican candidate, Abraham Lincoln; on the contrary, following "Father Abe's" election and Governor Thomas O. Moore's subsequent call for a secession convention, Mouton, who had maintained a high profile in the prairie parishes throughout the presidential campaign, announced his candidacy as a secessionist delegate.

Mouton's candidacy as a secessionist delegate favoring immediate dissolution of Louisiana's ties to the federal government profoundly influenced the election's outcome in the prairie parishes, for, as the

most prominent local politician of Acadian descent, his fellow Acadians looked to him for guidance. Running on the secessionist ticket for the senatorial seats representing the northern prairie parishes, Mouton and Lucius J. Dupre of St. Landry Parish overwhelmed their cooperationist opponents who favored the coordinated secession of the Southern slave states, but only upon the collapse of a proposed negotiated settlement of the slavery controversy. In the district's component parishes of Calcasieu, Lafayette, and St. Landry, the secessionists polled majorities of ninety-six, eighty-seven, and fifty-two percent respectively. Only in St. Landry Parish did the Mouton-Dupre campaign receive a stern test, a challenge arising from the resurgence of the region's once dominant Whig party faction, which sponsored a slate of cooperationist candidates. Alexandre Mouton's political ally, Alexandre DeClouet of St. Martin Parish, conducted a victorious secessionist campaign on the lower prairie. In Vermilion and St. Martin parishes, the pro-secessionist candidate received seventy-eight and eighty percent majorities respectively. As the secessionist juggernaut rolled over the prairie parishes, Acadians Joseph A. Breaux, Edmond L. Melancon, and J. K. Gaudet led an equally successful cooperationist campaign in the river parishes. These campaigns usually originated at parish-wide political rallies. In St. James Parish, a mid-December public assembly adopted resolutions urging the convocation of a slave-state congress, which would "summon back into the Union those of the Northern States which have withdrawn it, by violation of the Constitution." States either ignoring the call or refusing to refrain from continued transgressions of Southern constitutional rights

would be expelled from the Union. Other river cooperationists proposed laws fanciful solutions to the national political impass over slavery, but all conceded that, barring an improbable negotiated settlement, secession was the ultimate solution, the only viable means of protecting the South's vitally important "peculiar institution".

The faint hope of a negotiated settlement offered by the cooperationists appealed strongly to the large Acadian slaveholders in the river parishes who, like their counterparts throughout the South, feared the potentially ruinous consequences of a voyage across the uncharted waters of revolution and war. It is thus hardly surprising that, with the exception of Iberville Parish, where the Acadians constituted a large minority of the free population, cooperationists dominated the delegations representing the Acadian river and Lafourche Valley parishes.

Affinity for the cooperationists and secessionists labels paled into insignificance by January 23, 1861, when the delegates assembled in Baton Rouge. By late January, public opinion had swung solidly in favor of immediate secession. The erosion of public support for the cooperationist platform was reflected in the collapse of cooperationist opposition to a secession ordinance at the Louisiana convention. On January 26, the assembly, by a vote of 113 to 17, dissolved "the union between the State of Louisiana and other States".

The secession of Louisiana was merely one in a series of political upheavals which culminated, in early February 1861, in the establishment of a confederation of seven Deep South slave states. When President Lincoln challenged the fledgling government's authority

by attempting to reinforce Fort Sumter, in Charleston harbor, in early April 1861, Confederate batteries bombarded the garrison into submission, thereby committing the Confederacy to an armed struggle for independence.

The reduction of Fort Sumter by Confederate batteries was followed closely by the secession of the Upper South as well as Lincoln's call to arms. Responding to the threat of armed Northern intervention, 12,000 Louisiana volunteers rallied to the Confederacy's colors by June 1, but very few members of these volunteer units, most of which were quickly dispatched to Virginia, were of Acadian descent. For example, Company C of the 6th Louisiana Infantry Regiment, raised in St. Landry Parish by Acadians L. A. Cormier and L. E. Cormier, included only eight Cajuns in its complement of ninety-four officers and men.

Such was not the case with the river parish units. Twenty-seven percent of the recruits on the Donaldsonville Artillery Battery's muster roll bore Acadian surnames, though only five Acadian families actually resided in that Ascension Parish community. As demonstrated by the foregoing muster rolls, regional, cultural, and class differences among river and prairie Acadians continued to mold their perception of, and affinity to, the Southern way of life. Wishing only to be left alone, the insular, poor, non-slaveholding prairie Acadian viewed the war as an elitist cause and thus their apathetic response to Confederate recruiting ventures is hardly surprising. As B. W. Blakewood noted in a July 1861 letter to Confederate Secretary of War L. P. Walker:

> A goodly number of our citizens can neither speak nor understand the English language. . . . Talk to them of our constitutional

> rights and the sires of the Revolution, they look upon you with astonishment. That portion of our citizens that are best able to endure the hardships of a campaign are not in the field.

The prairie Cajuns' apathy was not shared by their more affluent cousins east of the Atchafalaya River. Many river Acadians had entered the planter class and thus had a very significant stake in the outcome of the war. Because of their high socio-economic status, most Acadian planters volunteered for military service as officers, either by raising companies or regiments, as did Brigadier General Louis Hebert; through regimental and company elections; or, as in the case of future Louisiana Supreme Court Chief Justice Joseph A. Breaux, through appointments as aides-de-camp. Because river Acadian officers were widely distributed throughout the regiments raised in Louisiana, the number of Acadians in companies organized within the predominately Acadian river parishes is frequently deceptively low. This is not to say that the Acadians were not well represented in these units. According to Napier Bartlett, J. O. Landry of Ascension Parish "went into the Confederate service as Lieut. Colonel of the 28th Louisiana, carrying with him five companies from his own parish, and as many blood relatives as the chief of a Scottish clan."

Alfred Mouton, son of former Governor Alexandre Mouton and hero of a late 1850s' vigilante campaign to rid the prairies of cattle and slave rustlers, also waged a successful recruiting campaign among the prairie Acadians in December 1861. But Mouton's success was atypical, and must be attributed to the recruiter's leadership position in the Acadian community, rather than to the recruits' affinity to the Southern cause.

Acadian apathy toward the war effort quickly degenerated into open hostility following the enactment of the initial Confederate Conscription Act in April 1862. Opposition to the measure was centered in the prairie parishes, where the isolated and highly individualistic Cajun farmers and ranchers viewed forced recruitment as an intolerable intrusion into their formerly peaceful lives. Recruitment programs in Southwest Louisiana were also consistently directed by Anglo-Saxons, usually East Texans, who, as their actions demonstrated, viewed the Acadians as social and cultural inferiors and treated them accordingly.

Conscription was first brought home to the prairie Acadians by the fall of New Orleans in April 1862 and by the resulting transfer of the Confederate state government to Opelousas. Fearing potential Federal invasions into Southwest Louisiana, the state adjutant general directed Brigadier General John G. Pratt of the state militia to establish a camp of instruction as a means of quickly processing conscripts badly needed by the Pelican State units in the Confederate service.

Camp Pratt, the enrollment and training installation established by General Pratt along the northern shore of Spanish Lake in May 1862, presented a living "Purgatory" to the Acadian conscript. According to Lt. George C. Harding, a Union prisoner-of-war detained at the camp of instruction from September through October 1862, life at the installation was dismal at best for the Acadian conscripts who wished only to remain on their prairie farms and vacheries (ranches):

> Camp Pratt was filled with Cajunn [sic] conscripts. . . . The wants of the Cajunn [sic] are few and his habits are simple. With a bit of cornbread, a potato, and a clove of garlic, with an occasional stewed crawfish, he gets along quite comfortably, and

> for luxuries, smokes husk cigarettes and drinks rum--when he can get it. The Cajunn [sic] has great powers of endurance, but not much stomach for fight. Of the herd at Camp Pratt, desertions were frequent, sometimes as many as thirty or forty stampeding in a single night. But they would be caught, brought back, made to wear a barrell [sic] for a week or two, and finally broke in.

Thus forcibly detained, the Acadian conscripts vented their frustrations by glaring for hours on end at Harding and his fellow Union prisoners of war, whom they apparently viewed at the ultimate source of their misfortunes.

Acadian opposition to conscription, intensified by the virtual imprisonment of the conscripts at Camp Pratt, grew increasingly tense throughout the summer of 1862, and culminated during the early fall with the draftees' refusal to voluntarily report to the camp for processing. The Cajuns' passive resistance to conscription coincided with feverish Confederate preparations to defend the Bayou Lafourche and Teche valleys from an imminent Federal invasion. In order to staff the regiments raised for the waterways' defense, as well as to reinforce Alfred Mouton's 18th Louisiana Infantry Regiment and V. A. Fournet's Yellow Jacket Battalion, units assigned to Major General Richard Taylor's command after having seen action at the Battle of Shiloh. Taylor, the district commander, was compelled to dispatch cavalry impressment details into the prairies. By this means, approximately 3,000 men were "enrolled and reported to Camp Pratt"; of this number, 2,000 were assigned to Mouton and Fournet's units. In fact, seventy-five percent of the 18th Louisiana's Acadian recruits in 1862 were conscripts trained at Camp Pratt. As reports of impressment spread among the prairie households, many draft-aged Cajuns went into hiding and, in the words of General Dick Taylor, had "to be hunted down

by detachments" from his small army "and brought in tied and sometimes ironed."

The effect of Confederate impressment was devastating on the already low Confederate morale in South Louisiana. In their baptism of fire at the Battle of Labadieville on October 27, 1862, the Camp Pratt conscripts assigned to the 18th Louisiana reportedly "threw away everything they had about them, except their guns, and made back tracks, boasting as they ran, that they had not fired a gun."

The poor performance of the Acadian conscripts at the Battle of Labadieville was an ominous beginning for the Confederate defense of the Lafourche and Teche valleys. Faced by overwhelming odds and forced to rely upon unseasoned troops, Dick Taylor could do little more than fight delaying actions when Major General Nathnaiel P. Banks launched a full-scale invasion of the south-central Louisiana "sugar bowl" in mid-January 1863, and, although the Cajun conscripts performed admirably in numerous skirmishes along the lower Teche, as well as at the battles of Bisland (April 12-13, 1863) and Irish Bend (April 14, 1863), the reluctant rebels took advantage of the Confederate retreat to return to their homes. According to General Taylor, during the frantic Confederate dash to safety in North Louisiana after the Battle of Irish Bend, Brigadier General H. H. Sibley, Taylor's inept brigade commander, deserted his command, thereby permitting his men to straggle

> without order over the whole line of march and adjacent country. . . . Thus commenced the scattering and straggling of our [the Confederate] troops and falling back to Vermilion Bridge. Nearly the whole of Lt.-Colonel Fournet's battalion, passing through the country in which the men had lived, before joining the army, deserted with their arms, remaining at their homes. In Companies B and D of Fournet's Yellow Jacket Battalion, the entire Acadian contingent deserted.

This reprieve from compulsory military duty was short-lived. After pursuing Taylor's rapidly dwindling army as far as Alexandria, Banks' Union invaders turned southeastward and lay siege to Port Hudson, taking with them over 10,000 head of cattle, Creole ponies, and mules from the Acadian prairie vacheries . In an effort to lift the siege, Dick Taylor's Texas cavalry regiments invaded the Upper Lafourche and Teche valleys, and, though subsequently repulsed in the east at Donaldsonville, the rebels captured Brashear City, the strategic rail terminus commanding the entire Teche Valley.

Now firmly entrenched in southwestern Louisiana, Texans, led by Brigadier General John Pratt, scoured the prairies for conscripts and deserters. Pratt and his underlings were ruthless in the execution of their duty, and a contemporary reported that the notorious enrolling officer secured recruits by "hunting them down with dogs, like slaves." These conscription forays were far less successful than their predecessors, for the majority of men subject to conscription, skulkers and deserters alike, had sought refuge either in the Atchafalaya Swamp or in the equally vast, and then sparsely inhabited prairie region.

As the prairie afforded them no natural defense, the fugitives were compelled to organize quasi-military bands to ward off the grey-coated predators. These bands, organized immediately following the northward flight of Taylor's army in the spring of 1863, operated primarily out of western and northwestern St. Landry Parish. Christened "Jayhawkers" by Confederate sympathizers, these bands were such superb fighting units that Rebel conscription units were effectively banished from the area west of Bayou Mallet and east of the

Calcasieu River. In fact, extant service records for the predominately Acadian 18th Louisiana Regiment and the Yellow Jacket Battalion indicate that only forty-three Acadians entered the service in 1863 (over 2,000 had been forcibly conscripted into the Confederate army one year earlier), and, of this number, thirty-four (79 percent) were conscripts.

The Jayhawker bands were initially organized strictly along ethnic lines, and it is noteworthy that muster rolls of Ozeme Carriere's Jayhawker band, provided to Confederate authorities by victims of the deserters' foraging raids, consistently failed to include a single Acadian surname. The evidence thus suggests that the Acadian skulkers and deserters sought refuge behind the formidable Jayhawker defensive perimeter, as did an estimated 8,000 of their counterparts from North Louisiana and East Texas. But, while the prairie Acadian population benefitted from the guerillas' presence, the Cajuns, particularly the residents of present-day Acadia Parish, also bore the brunt of the latter's frequently violent foraging raids, which usually left the settlers with "nothing of value."

In addition to Jayhawkers and Confederate conscription parties, the prairie Acadians were confronted by a third external threat--Union raiders. In August 1863, General Banks launched his notoriously unsuccessful Great Texas Overland Expedition, and, by late September, his 40,000-man army had advanced to Opelousas in the face of stubborn resistance from Col. Thomas Green's Texas cavalry unit. Chaffing under the "oppression" of the Texas units, the prairie Cajuns greeted the Federal troops as an army of liberation. An unidentified Indiana

officer, writing from a camp along the Vermilion River, issued the following report on the Acadian reaction to the Union invasion:

> The Union feeling in this portion of the state--especially among the poor class of citizens, is very strong. They are coming into our lines by the hundreds, and either volunteering or taking the oath of allegiance. Many of them say they have not been home or inside of a house for eighteen months, but have been hiding in the swamps to avoid the conscription. There is [sic] now already near three hundred of them mounted, and acting as scouts, and they are found to be very useful, as they are acquainted with every part of the country.

While encamped at Vermilionville (present-day Lafayette) in October 1863, Union Brigadier General Charles P. Stone, Banks' chief of staff, also reported that hundreds of residents in that overwhelmingly Acadian area had taken the oath of allegiance to the United States government, and, having grown "heartily tired of Texan rule," wished "to arm to protect the country from further inroads on the part of the rebel forces." Furthermore, Major General Edward Ord speculated that, with the assistance of Acadian scouts and four prominent local Unionists--two of whom were Acadians--approximately 1,000 men could be raised for the Federal army on the prairie.

Most of the potential Union recruits mentioned by General Ord were former Confederate deserters. As during the first Teche campaign, the Acadian conscripts profited by the headlong rebel flight from the Federal invaders, but, in this instance, the number of deserters was far greater. On September 22, 1863, Col. W. W. Hyatt, paymaster for Henry Gray's predominately Acadian brigade, reported that of the unit's complement of 1,800 men, less than 300 were present for duty. "My company," he continued, "numbers 3 privates; that of Kelso's, one; Calvit's, 8; and Ranson's, 4." These desertions brought to 2,500 the number of desertions sustained by the 18th Louisiana and Yellow Jacket

Battalion during the preceding twelve months.

The number of Acadian deserters was supplemented by troops who voluntarily submitted to capture in hope of receiving a Union parole and the opportunity to return home. The Union command was only too happy to issue paroles to their willing captives for "they, with scarcely an exception, seem glad to get out of the army, both volunteer and conscript."

The euphoria pervading the Acadian population as a result of the apparent magnanimity of the new Yankee regime quickly evaporated as the invaders proved even more unpalatable that their Texas predecessors. During the long months of Confederate occupation, the Rebels had seized locally at least 10,000 head of cattle for shipment to the armies of the eastern Confederacy. The expropriation of these cattle was, needless to say, a sore point with the local ranchers. Yet, in order to deprive Confederate foragers of the remaining, much needed supplies and in order to satisfy their own logistical demands resulting from an overdue supply train, the Federals appropriated and destroyed additional thousands of head of cattle in the heart of the Acadian ranch country, while simultaneously seizing enough Creole ponies to mount two regiments as well as hundreds of mules.

The actual depletion of local herds, however, exceeded the expectations of the Yankee field commanders. Many unauthorized raids were perpetrated by bored and hungry soldiers, whose commandants conveniently looked the other way, as long as they received a significant portion of the "contraband". The amount of produce and livestock taken in by these renegade foragers is obviously

incalculable, but the concensus of eyewitness accounts is that the total is staggering. Private Henry P. Whipple of the 29th Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry Regiment confided to his diary that, on a single raid in late October, "eighty loads of corn and a few sweet potatoes . . . and plenty of chicken, turkey, and honey" were brought into camp. Such figures pale by comparison to the number of cattle removed from the prairies. According to several reports, foragers not only killed calves merely for their tongues and brains, but "destroyed animals in mere wantonness." According to Richard Irwin of the 19th Army Corps, the soldiers in his company had gorged themselves on beefsteak to the extent that they "fairly loathed the sight, to say nothing of the smell, of fresh-killed beef" long before the belated arrival of the Union army's supply train.

The number of illicit foragers was supplemented by additional parties, usually entire cavalry companies, dispatched into the field by General William B. Franklin, the local Union field commander. These units funneled the appropriated beeves into centrally located vacheries for slaughter and subsequent distribution by the commissary officer. The following account of this operation, though published in the propagandistic Official Report Relative to the Conduct of Federal Troops in Western Louisiana, is substantiated by hundreds of eyewitness accounts in the French and American Claims Commission records:

> During the time that a division encamped near Mr. Elise Thibodeaux, on the Vermilion [River], cattle were driven up by the hundreds and butchered before his door, and so recklessly were they shot down that the bullets used penetrated his dwelling. . . . While cutting up the carcasses, they warmed thier feet at fires kindled with his wife's hand-cards, and fed with his plough beams and her loom. The atmosphere around was infected by the stench of offal and putrified carcasses; and as soon as the

> division moved away, his neighbors gathered to bury the festering remains. While engaged in their work, they counted one thousand seven hundred cattle heads, lying around, in every stage of decay.

Cattle were not the only livestock taken by Franklin's foragers. Through a directive issued in mid-October 1863 by Acting Adjutant General J. Schuyler Crosby, Franklin was authorized to seize all available horses to equip cavalry in the field, and the general executed this authority with a vengeance. The exact number of horses is not known, but F. H. Mason of the 42nd Ohio Infantry reported that they were seized "in great numbers" in St. Landry Parish and around Breaux Bridge.

Unable to speak the invaders' language, or read the confiscation orders, which the foraging party commanders delighted in waving under the noses of their hapless victims, the Acadian was powerless: "he could not remonstrate--he could only suffer."

The Acadian population also suffered at the hands of the black and white stragglers in the wake of Franklin's army. In Lafayette Parish, stragglers plundered the home of one Boudreaux, who was infirm and confined to bed. Narcisse Thibodeaux, a Breaux Bridge octogenarian, "was taken from his house by Federal soldiers accompanied by negroes [sic], and beaten with sticks, until he confessed where his treasures were hidden." In other, isolated incidents, an undetermined number of local women were also apparently raped. Such depredations became so commonplace that they were committed on a "daily" basis by late fall, according to one Union officer. As a consequence, Vermilionville (present-day Lafayette) residents were given extraordinary permission to "organize themselves into a patrol, for the protection of

themselves, their families, and personal property against marauders and thieves, black or white." But despite such measures, the indiscriminate looting of civilian residences continued, forcing Assistant Adjutant Wickman Hoffman to severely reprimand Federal regimental commanders for failing to maintain proper discipline among their troops, "whose conduct in straggling, stealing, and maltreating women is a disgrace to the name of American soldier." Hoffman's attempt to tighten lax discipline was issued too late to be effective, for it coincided with the Union withdrawal from the northern prairie parishes in December 1863. This retrograde movement was followed closely by the advance of Confederate pickets, Col. Louis Bush's 4th Louisiana Cavalry Regiment. Though the prairie parishes were stripped of their enormous agricultural wealth, they remained an important source of recruits; hence, following Federal incursions into the Upper Teche Valley during the Red River campaign of late March and April 1864 and the subsequent Confederate reoccupation of the area following the Battle of Pleasant Hill, the 4th Louisiana Cavalry regularly dispatched impressment parties into the prairies, "arresting and returning to their commands all deserters that could be found."

The conscripting officers also impressed all available civilians, even the walking wounded. In mid-December 1863, for example, A St. Landry Parish residents were outraged when Capt. W. C. Morrell pronounced Edmond Guidry, a Confederate veteran who had lost an arm in Virginia, "fit for duty" and returned him to the active duty roster.

This massive recruitment campaign was nevertheless surprisingly

successful. Writing to his wife from Franklin on May 13, 1864, Lt. Col. Louis Amedee Bringier of the 4th Louisiana Cavalry reported that "Our Right [flank which extended into the Attakapas prairie] is recruiting very rapidly. We now have for duty 600 men. . . . In less that one week we will have 1,000 men in the Formidable Fourth." The success of the spring 1864 recruitment campaign is attributable to several factors: First, the Acadian population had been enraged by the recent Union depredations. Second, many members of the impressment details were French-speaking residents of the river and Lafourche Valley parishes. The francophones rejected the brutality of their Texan predecessors, and the Acadian deserters were thus more amenable to reinduction into the Confederate service. The tact employed by the officers and men of the 4th Louisiana Cavalry, occasionally working in conjunction with local recruiting officers, is best reflected in Priscilla M. Bond's May 1864 account of conscription in Vermilion Parish:

> The town [Abbeville] has been kept in great commotion this week, Captain [Robert] Perry picking up deserters and conscripts. It has been quite amusing hearing of their hiding. One man could not be found till the captain seized his horse, then he came forward.

Finally, on May 18, 1864, Major General Richard Taylor, the departmental commander, issued a proclamation stating that:

> persons who owe military service to the Confederate States and are not now in the army are hereby ordered and directed to come forward and join the Louisiana Infantry Regiments...on or before the 1st day of June 1864, otherwise they will be considered and treated as Jayhawkers and shot down on sight.

Deserters returning to the service faced no disciplinary action under President Jefferson Davis's blanket pardon of 1863.

Once restored to the Confederate service, former Acadian deserters as well as new conscripts were induced to remain in the ranks by ever tightening discipline. Prior to his death in April 1864, Brigadier General Alfred Mouton had been accused by contemporaries of closing his eyes to desertion by his fellow Acadian troops, ostensibly because he feared that stern measures would scuttle his anticipated gubernatorial campaign. Such accusations are unfounded, for in early January 1864, the Acadian general ordered the execution of several deserters from the 18th Louisiana Infantry Regiment. With such heightened surveillance as well as the increasing immobility of the Confederate units in South Louisiana after May 1864, Acadians faced unacceptable risks when deserting and the overwhelming majority of Acadians in the Confederate service were compelled to adjust to army life.

ACADIANS IN TWENTIETH CENTURY LOUISIANA: EDUCATION AND URBANIZATION--A MICROCOSMIC VIEW, LAFAYETTE, 1900-1976.

Carl A. Brasseaux

Perhaps the most notable sociological trend in twentieth century America has been the country's drift toward cultural homogenization after a century of cultural diversification through massive non-Anglo-Saxon immigration. Such immigration, however, had precipitated a sharp anti-immigrant backlash among established, English-speaking Americans, and these biases were translated into national, state, and local legislative programs designed to bring non-English speakers into the Anglo-American mainstream. In Louisiana, the national crusade for cultural conformity was directed against the thousands of French-speakers in the southern parishes. Having shrunk from a large majority of Louisiana's total population in 1803 to a small minority (one estimate suggests less than twenty percent) of the state's residents, Francophones, whose political clout had dwindled in proportion to their numbers, found themselves unable to combat effectively the homogenization juggernaut. The state's English-speaking majority, like its counterparts in other states, came to associate the neighboring non-Anglo culture with ignorance and political corruption. Believing that this "backward" culture had retarded the state's postbellum economic development, Anglo legislators pushed through the general assembly between the late 1890s and 1921 several pieces of "reform" legislation designed to force insular Cajuns

into the Anglo-American mainstream. The compulsory education act of 1916, later incorporated into the 1921 state constitution, was unquestionably the most significant of these "reform" bills. Under the aegis of the legendary T. H. Harris, Louisiana's superintendent of education for nearly forty years, the state educational administration mandated that all public school classes be conducted in English. Implementation of compulsory English education, however, was usually undertaken by members of the Acadian elite.

As indicated in previous chapters, upwardly mobile Acadians crossed cultural boundaries as they moved from one economic class to another. Before the Civil War, these Acadians aspired to acceptance by the Creole planter caste, and, after the internecine struggle, to acceptance by the American businessmen who had come to dominate the local postbellum economy. Having thus become thoroughly Americanized, members of the Acadian gentry generally supported the crusade to Americanize the unassimilated Cajuns, whom they viewed with scorn. This is particularly true of those genteel Acadians who attended college at the height of American xenophobia in the early part of this century and, as the backbone of South Louisiana's burgeoning public educational system, zealously sought to stamp out their now disreputable mother culture.

The sweeping impact of compulsory education on Cajuns society is fully comprehended only when one examines South Louisiana's long tradition of illiteracy, reflected perhaps best in the high percentage of school-aged students kept at home by their parents in the early twentieth century. (See Table I.)

TABLE I

Percentage of White Educable Children Enrolled in Louisiana Public Schools, Acadian Parishes, 1915-1916

Acadia	59
Ascension	34
Assumption	45
Cameron	68
Iberia	52
Iberville	29
Lafayette	58
Lafourche	40
St. James	70
St. Landry	52
St. Martin	40
St. Mary	63
Terrebonne	49
Vermilion	60
West Baton Rouge	51

TABLE II

Percentage of White Educable
Children Enrolled in Louisiana
Public Schools,
Sample of Predominately Anglo,
North Louisiana Parishes,
1915-1916

Bienville	93
Bossier	93
Claiborne	91
Concordia	100
La Salle	95
Ouachita	92
West Carroll	99
Winn	93

Despite the harsh measures taken by school faculties to implement English-language education, the program met with remarkably little resistance from the Cajun community. This atypical show of pliability by the Cajuns stemmed from several factors. South Louisiana had never recovered from the economic disruptions wrought by the Civil War, and the dominant agricultural sector of the regional economic was particularly depressed during the 1920's and 1930's. Education seemed the only certain route to economic salvation. In addition, it had become painfully obvious to most Cajun parents that the old order had come to an end and that they would have to find their place in the new. Only education, once again, afforded their children the tools

necessary to make this transition. Finally, the technological revolution then sweeping across America brought with it new, and highly popular forms of entertainment which were available only in English.

South Louisiana's move toward the mainstream, temporarily disrupted by the dislocations produced by World War II, became accelerated during the post war era as the Cajun children of the Depression stressed the importance of education to their children. The resulting movement away from agriculture and into America's massive service economy is seen through an analysis of the Acadian population in Lafayette Parish for the years 1946 and 1976.

Between 1946 and 1976, the Acadian population of Lafayette Parish was forced to reconcile itself to the the myriad social, cultural, and economic changes wrought locally by the state's post-war oil boom and its attendant non-Acadian immigration. In accommodating itself to the new order, the Acadian population was once again transformed, but the changes wrought by urbanization were often more cosmetic than substantive. Indeed, the economic complexion of Acadian society in Lafayette Parish changed remarkably little during the course of these three decades. For example, analysis of the economic pursuits of 1,350 Lafayette Parish Acadians suggests that 79.9 percent of all gainfully employed Acadians held blue collar positions (see Table III); thirty years later, 73.6 percent of all working Acadians remained in the blue collar sector of the local economy. Only nine individuals were engaged in farming in the 1946 sample, while only one derived his income from the soil three decades later (see Table IV). Most blue-collar Acadians

already were, and their children would remain, in the service sector of the local economy, working as clerks, salespersons, cashiers, etc.

Contrary to the long-standing Cajun stereotype, comparatively few Lafayette Parish Acadians were employed in the skilled trades (e.g. mechanics, masons, carpenters, etc.) or in the oil industry. Indeed, in 1946, only 24 of the Acadians sampled (1.77 percent) were employed directly by the oil industry; this figure grew during the subsequent Hhirty years to 93 of 1,350 (6.88 percent), but a significant portion of these oil workers (perhaps 30-40 percent) were drawn from the local Acadian white-collar community.

Table III

Sampling of Acadian Blue Collar Workers

Lafayette Parish

1946

Blue Collar Jobs	Numbers
Ambulance driver	1
Attendant/hotel	0
Baker	10
Barber	17
Bartender	15

Battery repairman	1
Beautician	6
Billing mach. oper.	1
Blacksmith	2
Boat builder	1
Boilermaker	1
Bread wrapper	1
Bricklayer	2
Bus boy	1
Bus driver	5
Car washer	1
Carpenter	53
Caser	1
Cashier	16
Casing crew worker	1
Cement worker	4
Checker	3
Clerk	137
Cobbler	3
Coffee maker	1
Coffee roaster	1
Cook	12
Creamery worker	1
Deliveryman	7
Dental asst.	1
Derrick man	1

Dishwasher	1
Doorman	1
Drayman	3
Driller	2
Electrician	10
Elevator operator	1
Employee	39
Factory worker, Trappey's	21
Farmer	9
Fieldman	1
Fireman	11
Fisherman	2
Floor sander	1
Florist	1
Foreman	19
Furniture repairman	4
Gardiner	3
Gas station attdt.	24
Grader	1
Guard	8
Helper	35
House mover	1
Housewasher	1
Janitor	14
Kitchen worker	4
Kitchen worker	2

Laborer	51
Launderer/laundress	14
Lens grinder	2
Lineman	4
Machinist	9
Maid	5
Marker	1
Meat cutter	10
Mechanic	42
Meter reader/util.	3
Molder man, cab. fact.	1
Musician	3
Nurse	13
Nurse's aide	2
Oil field worker	4
Oil related	24
Operator eng., util.	1
Orderly	1
Painter	17
Partsman	2
Pipefitter	2
Plumber	4
Policeman	5
Porter	4
Postman	5
Press operator	2

Printer	2
Projectionist	2
Putty runner	1
Radio tech.	1
Railroad empl.	19
Railroad engineer	1
Receptionist	1
Refrigerator/repairman	1
Repairman	1
Salesman/woman	98
Sanitarian	2
Seamstress	13
Secretary/steno	47
Sheet metal app.	2
Sign painter	1
State hwy worker	1
Supplyman	0
Tailor	2
Taxi driver	15
Telegraph operator	1
Telephone oper.	44
Teleprinter op., West. Un.	1
Tinner	1
Trouble shooter/util.	3
Truck driver	47
Truck farmer	1

Waiter	33
Warehouse	2
Welder	2
Wrapper	1

Table IV

Sampling of Acadian Blue Collar Workers

Lafayette Parish

1976

Blue Collar	Numbers
Baker	1
Barber	4
Bartender	3
Beautician	6
Bindery worker	2
Body shop empl.	3
Bottler, Coca Cola	4
Bricklayer/mason	1
Bus driver	4
Cabinet maker	5
Cafeteria worker	3
Carpenter	9
Carpenter's helper	1
Cashier	20
Casing crew	1
Cement worker	3

Checker	1
Childcare/sitter	1
Clean up man	3
Clerk	70
Concession stand worker	1
Construction worker	1
Construction worker	1
Cook	11
Courier	1
Deliveryman	10
Dental asst.	1
Deputy sheriff	7
Dietary aide	1
Dispatcher	8
Diswasher	1
Draftsman	3
Drainage operator	0
Driller	1
Electrical tech.	1
Electrician	19
Electrician's helper	1
Employee	71
Engineering aide	3
Exploration tech.	2
Exterminator	3
Farmer	1

Fireman	7
Foreman	19
Gas station attendant	8
Guard	4
Helper	13
Horse trainer	1
Housekeeper	5
Ice cream sup.	1
Inspector	7
Insurance claims adj.	2
Inventory control	1
Janitor	30
Karate instructor	1
Keypunch operator	1
Kitchen helper	8
Kitchen supervisor	1
Laborer	11
Landscaper	1
Launderer/laundress	9
Lineman	15
Loader	1
Lot attendant	1
Machine operator	14
Machinist	2
Maid	23

Maintenance	7
Meat cutter/butcher	8
Meat packer	1
Mechanic	30
Mechanic's helper	1
Med. tech.	17
Mobile home installer	2
Mud engineer	1
Mun. serv. empl.	16
Nurse's aide	20
Nurse, pract.	12
Nursing home empl.	1
Offshore oil worker	6
Oil company worker, unid.	2
Oilfield worker	1
Operator engineer	1
Optometrist asst.	1
Orderly	5
Painter	11
Paramedic (Ac. Ambul.)	8
Parish employee	1
Parking attendant	1
Parts man	7
Pipe tester	1
Plumber	1
Policeman	1

Porter	8
Postman	4
Printer	4
Radio operator	1
Railroad workers	9
Receiver	1
Receptionist	10
Repairman	1
Roofing worker	1
Roustabout	6
Salesman	71
Salesman, used cars	2
Salesman, insurance	25
Seamstress	5
Sec./steno.	79
Service dept., Dairy Men	1
Serviceman	8
Serviceman, Xerox	1
Sheet metal worker	2
Shop hand	1
Surveyor	3
Tailor	1
Teacher's aide	1
Tech. aide	1
Technician	1
Telegraph operator	1

Telephone technician	5
Telephone operator	3
Television repairman	1
Tool pusher	1
Tree surgeon	1
Trimmer	1
Truck driver	57
Upholsterer	1
Utility worker	8
Waiter/waitress	12
Warehouse worker	6
Welder	3
Well tester	1
Yardman/gardener	5

Acadians in the white collar sector of the local economy represented a surprisingly large number of professions in 1946. The category containing managers and department heads constituted the largest single white collar group, accounting for 49 of the 271 Acadians represented in the sample. Bookkeepers (11.9 percent), grocers (9.6 percent), teachers (7.7 percent), bankers (4.0 percent), and engineers (3.7 percent) were the only other professions represented by ten or more individuals. This pattern changed little in the ensuing three decades. Business managers, corporate officers, and supervisors remained the largest single group of white-collar Acadian workers, accounting for 101 of the 356 (28.4 percent) white collar workers in

the 1976 sample. Following, in descending order, were bankers (8.9 percent), bookkeepers (7.0 percent), teachers (4.7 percent), and engineers (4.2 percent).

Conclusions

A prominent Louisiana historian recently observed that as the end of World War II, the state's Acadian population was still mired in the nineteenth century--still tied to agriculture and its attendant poverty. This cursory examination of the urban Acadian population of Lafayette Parish, however, calls this observation into question, for it is quite apparent from the foregoing statistics that the Acadian population in the vicinity of the Hub City had adapted itself to the realities of the twentieth century economy by the end of the Great Depression. Using the educational skills that they had acquired through compulsory education, they had come, by the dawn of the postwar era, to constitute the backbone of the city's commercial sector, which, according to contemporary business literature, constituted the business hub for the area lying within a thirty-five-mile radius of Jefferson Street. The Acadian community's brief flirtation with higher education in the 1950s and 1960s caused a proliferation of professionals, as evidenced by the 1976 white collar sample. Acadians lost interest in higher education after 1976 as a result of the short-lived oil boom, the consequences of which are only now being fully realized.

CAJUNS IN THE GOLDEN TRIANGLE

Carl A. Brasseaux

Because of the long-standing and still heated mutual animosity dividing Louisiana and Texas, casual observers frequently overlook the underlying economic and cultural ties that bind these states more closely together than with other Southern states. This is nowhere more evident than in the golden Trangle area of southeastern Texas, facetiously called "Cajun Lappland" by one scholar because "that's where Louisiana laps over into Texas."

Southeastern Texas has for two centuries been the economic and cultural crossroads at which met French Louisiana, the Spanish Southwest, and, more recently, Anglo-Saxon America. As early as the 1740's and 1750's, French traders from Louisiana were smuggling manufactured goods to the Karankawa and Attakapas Indians of the area, and, when the Spanish post of Orcoquisac was established near present-day Liberty, Texas to secure the area for Spain, the traders merely entered into business arrangements with local Spanish officials and went about their illict enterprises. The extent of these contacts is perhaps illustrated best by a 1770 inventory of the vast Dauterive vacherie between present-day St. Martinville and Lafayette, Louisiana, which contained approximately 6,000 Mexican longhorns.

The availability of longhorns in southeastern Texas first lured Acadians to the Golden Triangle. A dozen or so Acadians from present-day Vermilion and Acadia parishes--primarily members of the Broussard clan, joined by several of their Cajuns neighbors representing the Blanchet and Pivoteau families migrated to the Port

Arthur area sometime around the end of the Texas revolution. From the ranches that they established in the Golden Triangle, these transplanted Cajuns subsequently organized periodic cattle drives into Louisiana.

With the notable exception of a few dozen refugees from the Attakapas and Opleousas vigilante movements of the late 1850's and a few businessmen who made Galveston their home in the 1880's, few other Acadians crossed the Sabine until the dawn of the twentieth century, when the discovery of oil at Spindletop, near Beaumont, precipitated an economic boom that attracted to the Golden Traiangle thousands of fortune seekers. Indeed, within one year, the population of the then sleepy farming community of Beaumont quadrupled in size. Feuling the phenomenal growth of this boom town were large numbers--reportedly "thousands", though probably only a few hundred--of Cajun farmers and sharecroppers. An oral traditional among their descendants maintains that recent boll weevil infestation of their crops had caused these people to lose everything, and they eagerly anticipaated the higher wages and steady employment promised by the infant industries fed by the Texas oil boom. They were not disappointed, and they stayed. According to one local historian, over ninety pecent of the Cajun immigrants remained west of the Sabine.

Over the ensuing eight decades, these Louisiana exiles and their numerous, Texas-born progeny have made a lasting mark on their adopted homeland. Indeed, the Cajun presence in the Golden Triangle area was noticeable even to outsiders fifty years ago. Writing about Beaumont in the mid-1930's, a group of WPA writers observed that

> Old names, many of them French, are on store fronts and street markers. Some of the names are of descendants of Acadians who came to Beaumont in early years. [They] brought drip coffee and bisque, as well as many Gallic words and customs, to the Neches settlements. Beaumont today has a decided taste for crab gumbo and bouillabaisse. (Beaumont: A Guide to the City and Its Environs [Houston, Tex., 1935], p. 15)

Between 1910 and the end of World War I, Cajuns settlements appeared also in Port Arthur, to which Spindletop oil was transported for refining and water-borne transportation, and Orange, which became a ship-building center during World War I. Partially as a result of the Cajun influx, which was revived during the depths of the Great Depression, these communities also became boom towns; Orange, for example, grew from a village of 765 in 1900 to a city of 46,140 in 1940.

Orange's Cajuns, like those in nearby Port Arthur and Beaumont, were generally illiterate, and thus were intially forced into blue-collar positions in the oilfields, the refineries, and the shipyards. As with their cousins in South Louisiana, these laborers learned the value of formal education from these work experiences. Second-generation Cajuns in the Golden Triangle thus consistently finished high school, while their children (third-generation Texas Cajuns) generally attended college. In the post-World War II era, workmen have watched their college-educated children take their places in the front offices of the refineries and shipyards where they had toiled for decades with only limited advancement. Other college graduates have formed their own businesses and, in 1986, seventy-nine Beaumont businesses were owned by Cajuns.

The Texas and Louisiana Cajuns communities also experienced

parallel development in the area of cultural evolution. As in South Louisiana, compulsory English education took its toll upon Cajun culture, which went into a long period of decline until the 1970's. Also contributing to the erosion of Cajun culture were the dwindling contacts between the transplanted and parent communities. Interviews with Cajun residents indicates that, in the early part of this century, Texas Cajuns frequently crossed the Sabine to visit close relatives. Following the deaths of the first generation migrants, however, these visits were sharply curtailed by the second-generation Texas Cajuns, who ususally visited their Louisiana relatives only two or three times a year. Today, the third-generation Cajuns generally feel no affinity whatsoever for their now largely forgotton Louisiana families, and hence are almost completely divorced from the parent culture.

This is not to say that the 20,000 to 30,000 Cajuns who currently reside in the Golden Triangle have turned their backs on their heritage. Largely through the efforts of second-generation Cajuns, particularly those of the Beaumont area who organized, in 1980, Les Acadiens du Texas, the Cajun community of the Golden Triangle area has experienced a cultural revival reminiscent of that in Acadiana. Six radio stations now broadcast French-Cajun music, and one of these boasts--apparently without fear of contradiction--that it plays more Cajun music per day than any station in French Louisiana. The Golden Triangle area also now points proudly to its several fine Cajun restaurants, which are now the focal point of a regional effort to diversify the beleaguered oil-based economy.

The Cajun culture of the Golden Triangle area is, perhaps to a greater extent than its Louisiana counterpart, a synthetic product, the result of far greater demographic mixing between Acadian and non-Acadian groups. Approximately forty percent of the Cajun residents of Beaumont, for example, trace their roots to non-Acadian families in Evangeline and St. Landry Parishes. A statistical analysis of the Acadian/Cajun families of Beaumont--the oldest and larges Cajun community of the Golden Triangle--follows below:

BEAUMONT, 1985-86

Acadians and Cajuns,

Percentage of total population

Acadians	2032	Persons (estimated 4/household)	
Percentage		.0427699	8128
Cajuns	1608		
Percentage		.0338455	6432

CAJUNS

Abshire	15
Alleman	6
Amy	4
Ancelet	1
Andrepont	10
Andrus	30

Angelle	7
Ardoin	22
Arnaud	1
Aubry	2
Auzenne	3
Bailleaux	5
Barousse	2
Barras	11
Bearb	1
Beaulieu	1
Bebeaux	2
Becnel	1
Begneaud	4
Berthelot	1
Bertinot	1
Bienvenu	1
Bihm	1
Billodeaux	1
Blanchet	1
Bordelon	1
Boutte	22
Braquet	2
Brignac	1
Brouillette	1
Bruneau	2
Calais	1

Cantrelle	4
Carlin	10
Castille	15
Celestin	4
Chappuis	1
Carboneau	2
Chargois	13
Chatagnier	2
Chatelain	1
Chauvin	6
Chavanne	2
Cloteaux	6
Courville	16
Credeur	2
Daigle	50
Daugereau	2
DeBlanc	2
Decuir	15
Dejean	5
Delahoussaye	5
Delatte	5
Deshotel	17
Desormeaux	6
Devillier	3
Domingue	12
Dore	2

Dubuisson	4
Duchamp	3
Dufour	2
Dumesnil	2
Duperier	5
Duplantier	2
Duplantis	2
Duplechien	12
Duplessis	2
Dupre	2
Durand	3
Durousseau	2
Duruisseau	2
Falcon	3
Falgout	7
Faul	5
Faulk	14
Fontenot	137
Founet	2
Fruge	10
Fuselier	13
Gaspard	2
Gauthier	7
Goudeaux	16
Guidroz	5
Guillory	120

Higginbotham	12
Hoffpauir	20
Hollier	9
Hubert	15
Hulin	4
Himel	4
Jagneaux	7
Janise	35
Jarreau	5
Joubert	19
Jumonville	2
Juneau	1
La Pointe	10
La Porte	3
Laborde	7
Labrie	5
Lacaze	5
Lacour	9
LaFleur	20
Lafosse	3
Lagrange	4
Lalande	2
Lambert	8
Lanclos	10
Lancon	2
Landreneau	1

Lastrapes	2
Lavergne	15
Laviolette	1
Lebeau	9
Lebleu	9
LeBoeuf	19
LeBourgeois	1
Ledet	36
LeDoux	12
Legendre	6
Leleux	8
LeMaire	11
Lemieux	2
Louviere	9
Luquette	13
Manuel	38
Marcheaux	3
Marcantel	7
Marchand	1
Martel	7
Matherne	2
Matte	2
Mayeaux	6
Meaux	11
Menard	5
Moreau	2

Olivier	10
Ortego	12
Oubre	1
Patin	6
Pellerin	2
Peltier	6
Perrodin	1
Picard	5
Picou	8
Ponthieux	1
Primeaux	6
Prudhomme	12
Quebedeaux	24
Rabelais	8
Rideaux	13
Romero	12
Rougeau	6
Royer	9
St. Amant	1
St. Julien	6
Savant	7
Schexneider	13
Segura	24
Sensat	7
Simon	63
Simoneaux	10

Soileau	21
Speyrer	3
Stelly	28
Thibeaux	5
Touchet	7
Toups	13
Venable	13
Veronie	1
Verret	12
Vidrine	2
Villere	5
Waguespack	6
Zeringue	4

ACADIANS

Arceneaux	23
Aucoin	4
Babin	22
Babineaux	25
Barrilleaux	6
Baudoin	1
Bellard	18
Benoit	22
Bergeron	19
Bernard	43
Bertrand	40

Blanchard	24
Bodin	5
Bourque	11
Boutin	2
Brasseaux	5
Braud	2
Breaux	54
Broussard	178
Carmouche	3
Carriere	7
Chiasson	6
Comeaux	30
Cormier	33
D'Entremont	3
Daigre	1
Delaune	1
Derouen	19
Doiron	17
Doucet	28
Dugas	19
Duhon	31
Dupuis	15
Foret	9
Fournier	6
Gaudet	6
Gautreaux	10

Guilbeau	14
Guidry	116
Hebert	129
Jeansonne	2
Labauve	15
Lachaussee	5
Landry	100
Leger	60
LeBlanc	142
LeJeune	28
Martin	156
Melancon	29
Mire	4
Mouton	53
Naquin	4
Pitre	12
Prejean	29
Richard	75
Roger	1
Roy	45
Savoie	29
Semere	1
Sonnier	38
Theriot	6
Thibodeaux	87
Trahan	70
Vincent	24

P. O. BOX 553, OPELOUSAS, LA, 70570

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